THE LAST GREAT INDIAN WAR

(Nulato 1851)

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April 27, 1995
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A

THESIS

Presented to the Faculty

of the University of Alaska Fairbanks

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

By

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Fairbanks, Alaska

May 1995

Abstract

In this study, I review the causes of an Athabaskan conflict in western Alaska which occurred in 1851. This hostility is known in published sources as the Nulato Massacre. In oral tradition the same incident is referred to either as the Last Great Indian War or simply "The Nulato War". Critical reading and analysis of primary and secondary historical source materials offer insight into external pressures on the indigenous population, the analysis of oral tradition the resulting internal pressures. The combination of historic documentation and oral tradition provide a basis for the analysis of the Nulato Massacre as an internecine conflict. The Koyukon point of view reveals this conflict to be the result of a shamanistic power contest. While it may be argued that the conflict was precipitated ultimately by economic and social post-contact dislocations, the Koyukon perceive it as a disturbance of their concept of universal psychic unity, an overarching conceptualization which encompasses all aspects of Koyukon worldview. It was imperative in their view to regain control of their lives. The role of the shaman in such restoration was paramount.

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Acknowledgements

To the late Charlie Brush, for your insight and storytelling ability, without your knowledge and dedication to education and cultural perpetuation this thesis would not be a reality;

To the people of Nulato and Kaltag for the encouragement, support, and willingness to disclose part of your beliefs so that others may understand the intricate aspects of Koyukon culture;

To Athabaskan people throughout the Doyon region, particularly Dr. Eliza Jones, who have profoundly changed my life through your generosity, intelligence, resilience, and humor;

To the Doyon Foundation for spiritual and financial support;

To my advisory committee chair, Dr. Lydia T. Black, who provided unconditional support and guidance throughout every phase of my thesis, and who has been an exceptional mentor and role model;

To all my committee members, who have inspired me over the years, and provided invaluable critiques and assistance;

To my parents who demonstrated through their own lives that I could accomplish whatever I set my mind to;

And finally, to my husband Gareth, my daughter Shannon, and my grandchildren who have endured my graduate work and professional life, and who continue to provide me with hope, joy, laughter, and perspective;

Anaa Maasee' (Thank you very much!)

NOTE ON ORTHOGRAPHY

Place names are cited as they appear in original publication or in English transliteration where the work has been translated. Koyukon names in orthography developed by Alaska Native Language Center and the current geographic names are given in brackets when location can be identified.

Chapter 1: Introduction

One winter night in 1851, a Russian trading post on the Lower Yukon River in western Alaska, was attacked by the Koyukon Indians. During the raid, Lieutenant John Barnard, a British officer and participant in the search for the Franklin expedition[1] was mortally wounded and the Russian post manager, Vasillii Deriabin, was killed. Other personnel at the post were successful in warding off the Athabaskan warriors. The events which occurred that night were described by early British and American explorers as an attack by the Koyukon Indians on the Russian American Company. In literature, references to this conflict are most often based on William H. Dall's report, Alaska and Its Resources (1870) or Hubert Bancroft's History of Alaska 1730-1885 (1886). Both accounts are secondary, Dall's version is based largely on hearsay, and Bancroft's is derivative. Nevertheless Dall's statement, that the hostilities were sparked by Lt. Barnard's disregard for protocol in summoning the chief of the Koyukuk River, has been repeated in the majority of published accounts. The journal of Dr. Edward Adams, kept from 1850-1851, (MS 1115) by a British surgeon who like Barnard was part of Collinson's detachment searching for Franklin, provides the only primary account of this hostility which became known as the Nulato Massacre. Adams' narrative provides his own observations made in the massacre's aftermath and an analysis of the eye-witness reports. His journal offers a wealth of detail which accords well with Native oral traditions, but until recently his data were not discussed in literature (except Schneider 1986, Badger Ms.). However there is little or no discussion about the massacred Native population who had assembled for trading and winter feasting at *Noolaaghedoh*, a settlement approximately one-half mile west of the Russian post. The earliest and best narratives

which mention the Native victims were recorded by Julius Jetté, S. J., a Roman Catholic priest who lived in the area from 1898-1927. Jetté was fluent in the local language and recorded two versions of the conflict - one from a man who escaped and another from an individual whose *mil'aa* (mother's brother) participated as a warrior. Jetté also had access to the 1872 records of Auguste Lecorre, a Catholic priest of the Oblate order of Mary Immaculate in Canada. Lecorre travelled through interior Alaska from 1862-1874. A few articles based on Jetté's work have appeared in The Collegian and The Alaska Journal[2] (Renner 1985), but no comprehensive synthesis of oral tradition and documented sources has been attempted to date.

I analyzed information recorded by Adams and Jetté then proceeded to review a number of audio tapes recorded in the Koyukon language and housed at the University of Alaska's Rasmuson Library oral history collections. These tapes contain information on the massacre unavailable in other sources. The emic view contained in these oral narratives support Jetté's conclusion that the Nulato conflict was an internecine war. However, these tapes reveal much about Koyukon ideology and what the Nulato Massacre was really about. According to these oral accounts, the attack at *Noolaaghedoh* was part of a 'shaman war' which involved three regional *deyenenh*, spiritual intermediaries or shamans in modern terminology: one from *Hogholedlenh Denh*[3], a former settlement on the south bank of the Yukon river across from present day Kaltag, another from *Todenaats'egheeltaanh Denh*[4], also known as Whaleback, on the Unalakleet River, and the third from *Kodeelkaakk'at*, a former settlement on the Kateel, a tributary of the Koyukuk River. This accords with information supplied by Adams, who in his journal describes the ritualistic killing of the *deyenenh* from *Hogholedlenh Denh* and provides an autopsy report on the *deyenenh's* body. I then expanded my research to interviews with elders who might be familiar with the traditional accounts, orally transmitted in Koyukon communities. My inquiries addressed to elders from Kaltag and Nulato have produced the name of the *Hogholedlenh Denh deyenenh*, the location of his burial place and insights into

beliefs associated with his spiritual strength, as well as numerous details and native interpretations of the Nulato Massacre. From these discussions it became apparent that the ideology of the Koyukon, intricately entwined in all aspects of their life, was an important, perhaps paramount, feature which structured the conflict. To discuss the far-reaching implications endured by these people at the "Last Great Indian War" a journey through their world view is in order. The Native view presented below is the main focus of this thesis.

Chapter 2: Statement of Problem: Inter-group conflict

Many Native oral traditions include episodes of internecine warfare, the role of the *deyenenh* in such conflicts, and the decline in warfare which is discussed in terms of the arrival of the "white man". The arrival of Russian explorers in the 1830s has served as a timeline for many Native oral traditions which are laced with accounts of the first encounter between Athabaskans and Russians. The 1851 conflict at Nulato, discussed in local tradition as the "Last Great Indian War", has become an event around which many oral traditions revolve. However, in literature, as in many cases where historical events are described by Europeans or Americans, almost all authors have elevated Barnard, an Englishman whose presence was accidental, to hero status with no mention of the Native population annihilated at *Noolaaghedoh*. A memorial lauding Bernard was erected at Nulato and well maintained for a number of years (Renner 1985). Meanwhile, without a marker or a visible memorial to the men, women, and children who perished at *Noolaaghedoh*, the village site and skeletal remains, exposed along the eroding river bank, became a curiosity for foreign travelers coming to the area. Archival photographs attest to the amusement these travelers had at the grave site of these lost souls, inventing games involving the bones of the dead (Ulen Collection).

My analysis offers a perspective on the pressures the Athabaskans faced, and which may have sparked this event in which one Athabaskan group attempted to annihilate another. I concentrate on the available data regarding tensions generated by changing situation when Russian and British commercial interests penetrated the area and on sources of information which focus on the Koyukon Athabaskans of the Nulato area. To develop an understanding of the response mechanisms of the indigenous

people, I reviewed data on trade networks, epidemics, group solidarity, and inter-group conflicts antedating contact with Europeans. A brief background and historical overview of the activities of the Russian-American Company and the Native situation when they first encountered one another will be offered. Insights into the Koyukon political structure are discussed in the context of the tensions which developed as foreign fur traders challenged the indigenous trade system, and the Native response in context of their ideology, particularly their worldview, and the role of the *deyenenh*.

Chapter 3: Sources

The earliest published sources of information on the Koyukon are the journals of Glazunov (manuscript in Shur Collection, Rasmuson Library; Wrangell 1980:69-80; Vanstone 1959:37-47), and Kashevarov (in Khlebnikov published in English 1994:328-342), both dating to 1833-1838, followed by Lieutenant Lavrentii Alekseevich Zagoskin, a Russian naval officer and explorer of interior Alaska from 1842-1844 (1847; 1967 English translation).[5] Zagoskin provides the first discussion of the lower Koyukon people and their territories based on earlier explorations by Ivan Iakovlevich Vasil'ev, Fedor and Petr K. Kolmakov father and son respectively, Andrei Glazunov, and Petr Vasil'evich Malakhov as well as his own observations. Zagoskin spent some of his time among the Lower Koyukon and at Nulato in 1843, only five years after the Russian explorer, Malakhov[6], first reached Nulato. For information on the Nulato Massacre an invaluable source is, as already mentioned, the journal kept by Dr. Edward Adams (MS 1115) between October 1850 to July 1851. Adams was assistant surgeon aboard the H.M.S. "Enterprise" captained by Richard Collinson, C.B., R.N on an expedition via the Bering Strait in search of Sir John Franklin's ships. Adams' journal, the only primary source on the conflict of 1851, contains eye witness reports and analysis of the aftermath of the massacre.

The records of the Russian Orthodox Church and the journals kept by the missionaries, Father Netsvetov (Black 1984) and Father Illarion (Oswalt 1960) provide additional insight on the various Athabaskan groups with whom they came in contact. Members of the Western Union Telegraph Expedition of 1865-1867, Whymper (1869), Dall (1870, 1898), and George Adams (1982) contribute to the ethnographic literature and discussion. Very important is the work of the Roman

Catholic priest Julius Jetté, S. J., also mentioned above, who lived among the Koyukon for twenty-nine years. Jetté lived with the Nulato people from 1889 to 1906. He then went to Canada for a year. Upon his return to Alaska, Jetté served the communities of Nulato, Kokrines, and Tanana from 1907-1926, and the Holy Cross mission for a few months in the winter of 1926-1927. During his years in Alaska, Jetté compiled a wealth of ethnographic and linguistic data on the Athabaskans of this area. He became fluent in the Koyukon language and translated several church hymns and prayer books into Koyukon. In addition to keeping a census as prescribed by the Roman Catholic Church mission rules, he also collected geographic place names along the Yukon River from Ft. Yukon to Holy Cross, along the Kaltag-Unalakleet Portage, and for the Kaiyuh region (see below). Jetté, a scholar, was very interested in the origins of Native Americans and devoted much time to recording the narratives of the people among whom he lived. To summarize, he gathered extensive census information on the Koyukon as well as toponymy and information on tribal subdivisions, "polities" or "societies". He studied their language, narratives, and movement patterns to provide information to the scientific community interested in the Bering Strait migration theory (Jetté M/F 96, Roll 35).[7] Utilizing the mileage figures compiled in 1869 by Captain Charles W. Raymond, U. S. Army, and the estimated distances given by entrepreneur Francois Mercier[8] (Mercier 1986:72-75) who plied the Yukon River between 1868-1885, Jetté examined the various spellings and meanings of Native placenames, and compared them with those provided by earlier traders and explorers. He also provided detailed sketches of the Native territories.

Since this study is concerned with events surrounding the Nulato Massacre of 1851, an Athabaskan conflict, I will review the earlier information provided by Zagoskin (1967), Netsvetov (Black 1984), Whymper (1869), Dall (1870), Jetté (1908-1909), as well as later analyses by anthropologists, such as Osgood (1936), deLaguna (1947), and Loyens (1966). The delineation of historic territories will utilize Jetté's

unpublished document The Geographic Place Names of the Koyukon as corroborated by the research of Eliza Jones (1986), a Koyukon and fluent speaker of the language. In collaboration with the Alaska Native Language Center, Jones re-elicited names from elder Koyukon speakers to verify the work of Jetté. Another important unpublished source is Jetté's typed manuscript, The Particulars of the Nulato Massacre. In addition accounts provided by early explorers (Raymond 1869; Petrof [Petroff, Petrov] 1880; Schwatka 1883; Allen 1985; Ray 1900; Nelson 1899; Stoney 1900; Cantwell 1902; Jacobsen 1977), other missionaries (Lecorre 1874; Barnum 1891-1898; Chapman 1940; Stuck 1915, 1917; Sullivan 1936, 1942), and anthropologists (McFadyen-Clark 1960, 1974; Foote 1965; Hall 1976; Oswalt 1963; VanStone 1959, 1964; Burch 1975, 1976; Burch & Correll 1972; Nelson 1974, 1983; Ganley, forthcoming) are also utilized to substantiate discussion of the Koyukon and their geographic location.

Oral narratives provided by Athabaskan residents in the communities in the study area, often by descendants of participants in the Nulato Conflict (Songs & Legends Series; Huntington 1993; Joe 1987; Beetus 1980; Solomon 1981; Simon 1981) are considered. These last named materials are especially important in establishing a better understanding of the Native perceptions of this conflict in the context of Koyukon ideology, the internal and external pressures which affected the indigenous people, and their response to these pressures following contact with Europeans. This oral information consists of personal testimony by contemporary Native elders I interviewed, as well as audio tapes collected by the Oral History Department of the University of Alaska Fairbanks in the early 1970s under the "Songs and Legends" series. In selecting these accounts, I focused on the recollections of war, starvation, identity of "tribes", an account of the first sighting of Russians, and accounts of the Nulato War itself. History of European contact will be discussed first.

Chapter 4: History of European Contact

In 1833, Lieut. Mikhail Tebenkov, later Chief Manager of the Russian-American Company in Alaska, established an outpost named Redut Sv. Mikhaila approximately sixty miles north of the mouth of the Yukon River, which the Russians called Kvikhpak, a Yupik toponym [in modern orthography, Kuigpak]. This post became known colloquially as Mikhailovskii Redoubt, and in the present day St. Michael. The plan was to explore the Yukon from here and to establish trade with coastal and interior inhabitants. The task of initial exploration was assigned to Andrei Glazunov, a creole[9] educated at Sitka and rated a quartermaster in company service, and A.F. Kashevarov, also a creole, who at that time commanded company vessels. Glazunov was the first of the early explorers to investigate the mouth of the Yukon River and its reaches during the winter of 1833-1834. The earliest published accounts of Glazunov[10] appeared in Russia in the 1800s. However, he became known only recently though an English version (from a French copy) translated by VanStone (1959:37-47), and A. F. Kashevarov[11] reported by K. T. Khlebnikov (1979, English translation 1994:328-342). Wrangell's second hand account published in Russian in the nineteenth century was also recently translated (1980:69-80). Glazunov reported that in December 1833, he arrived at the settlement, Klikitarik [Kiktaguk] [see Map 1, p. 56] which was an intermediate stop for Ingalik from the Yukon when they travelled to the Bering Sea coast to sell beaver pelts to the coastal inhabitants at Pastolik (VanStone 1959:40). The route followed an overland passage leading to the headwaters of the Anvik River which flows into the Yukon River. The coastal settlement of Klikitarik was located east-northeast of Mikhailovskii Redoubt which in turn is north of Pastolik. Glazunov reports that the Natives at Mikhailovskii refused to serve as his guides and interpreters if he persisted in traveling south along the Pastolik River where it was rumored that the inhabitants were preparing to attack the Russian expedition (Khlebnikov 1994:330; Wrangell 1980:70). What reason

existed at this early point for strife among the Native population and the Russians? While that question remains unanswered, it illustrates a resistance to change of some sort, possibly a response to the disruption of the direct link to the inland trade, general intolerance of intruders, old enmities or any number of reasons.

Nevertheless, by January 1834, Glazunov descended the Anvik River and reach the Yukon. His report provides the first account of strife among the Athabaskans. On January 17, Glazunov arrived at a cabin occupied by an Athabaskan, his wife, and three children. The man stated that the inhabitants of Anvik village were preparing for an invasion by the inhabitants of the Unalakleet River. Purportedly a quarrel had developed between the two groups during a caribou hunt in which the Anvik people had been more successful than their neighbors (Tikhmenev 1978:42). From the description provided here, it appears that the family on the Anvik with whom Glazunov camped, was socially aligned with the people from Anvik village situated further downstream toward the Yukon River.

On this trip, Glazunov successfully laid the ground work for the Russian penetration into the Native trade network of the interior. After his arduous journey to find a route to Cook Inlet, Glazunov returned to Mikhailovskii Redoubt in April 1834. He returned to the Yukon in 1834 and again in 1836 when he established a post at Ikogmiut [Russian Mission] (Pierce 1990:168). Glazunov managed the Ikogmiut post until his death in 1846. The post at Ikogmiut provided incentive for Iakov Netsvetov, also a Creole, to establish a Russian Orthodox base at this settlement in 1845. Glazunov initially served as interpreter for Netsvetov and assisted in getting the mission established. This community provided convenient access to the Yukon-Kuskokwim portage, with good summer and winter communication routes to Mikhailovskii Redoubt and the river ways, particularly to the upstream communities along the Yukon and the Innoko Rivers (Black 1984:xv).

The second penetration into the heart of Alaska on behalf of the Russian-American Company was by Petr Vasil'evich Malakhov, a creole son of Baranov's

agent, Vasilii Malakhov, and an Aleut mother, who arrived at Mikhailovskii Redoubt in the spring of 1837, to continue the explorations initiated by Glazunov. The intent was to establish a post on the upper Yukon to extend the fur trade further into the Interior. Malakhov reached the Yukon River on the twenty-sixth of February, 1838 via an overland route which terminated at the Yukon settlement of *Kakhatukkatuk*.[12] He then traveled upstream, reaching a Native settlement at the mouth of the Nulato River on March 10, 1838. Here he found:

> ...11 men and 18 women and children, and 7 Ulukagmiut [people from the Kaltag portage] men with their families who were stopping there to trade. They informed him that in the spring many people came down the river to Nulato to trade furs and prepare dried fish (Pierce 1990:337).

Malakhov then ascended the Yukon to the mouth of the Koyukuk River, which is eighteen to twenty miles upstream from the Nulato River. In some accounts this distance is stated as fifty miles based on Malakhov's estimations in versta, the equivalent of .6629 miles. If this were so, Malakhov would have passed the present day Galena, which would be easily recognized in his geographic descriptions. He returned down the Yukon river, having decided that the confluence of the Nulato and the Yukon Rivers was the best place for a trading post. In the winter of 1838-1839, Malakhov set out on a second trek to the Yukon with instructions to establish a post at Nulato. Starting from Unalakleet settlement, Malakhov found a shorter overland route to Nulato via the Unalakleet River. It appears that the Athabaskans were attempting to delay or possibly prevent further penetration of their territory by concealing this shorter, easier overland route. On reaching Nulato on March 28, 1839, Malakhov found a small pox epidemic raging in the Native community. Malakhov decided to build a log cabin approximately one half mile upstream [east] from the confluence of the Nulato and the Yukon Rivers where the Native settlement, *Noolaaghedoh*, was located. Here Malakhov and his men remained until the spring break-up when they returned to Mikhailovskii Redoubt via the Yukon River.

Malakhov was instructed to return to Nulato that fall.

Thus in November 1839, Malakhov once again arrived at Nulato. This time with five Company employees. There were three Russians: Vasilii Deriabin, Kharitonov, and Trofimov; Karl Nordstrem, a Finn, who later became the manager of the post; and Lavrentii Ovchinnikov, a creole. On arrival at Nulato settlement, they found that all the natives had died of smallpox, thus there were no food stores to be found. Malakhov along with one Russian and the Creole, Ovchinnikov, returned to the mouth of the Unalakleet River to secure supplies from the company stores. Here rumor was rampant that the inland Natives, blaming the Russians for the smallpox epidemic, were gathering in villages along Malakhov's return route with hostile intent. Their intention according to the rumors was to stop further Russian incursion into their territory. As Malakhov's expedition was preparing camp, he took up his pistol and, for unexplained reasons shot Ovchinnikov through the heart as Ovchinnikov was tying up the sled. This episode terminated Malakhov's activity in the Interior. An investigation was held, and Malakhov was apparently exonerated. He was reassigned to explorations along the Susitna River and never returned to the Yukon.

During the winter of 1839-1840, only Nordstrem, Deriabin and one other Russian remained at Nulato. The Native settlement, wiped out by the smallpox epidemic the previous year, remained unoccupied during this period. Nordstrem left Nulato in the spring for Mikhailovskii Redoubt with plans to return by fall. He left Mikhailovskii Redoubt in August 1840, but did not return to Nulato. Malakhov reported that Nordstrem's men were suffering from scurvy, therefore he and his men remained at *Khutul'kakat*[13] a tributary of the Yukon. Nordstrem used this opportunity to conduct trade with the Natives, securing a large amount of beaver pelts (Malakhov cited in Zagoskin 1967:188). The following year 1841, Nordstrem again wintered and traded at *Khutul'kakat*. The other Russians also vacated the Nulato post, which remained unoccupied for a short time until Deriabin, now appointed as

manager [baidarshchik], was dispatched to Nulato, arriving in early September 1841.

The Russian-American post at Nulato was burned by the Natives during the Russian absence, but rebuilt by Deriabin upon his return (see sketch p. 59). He remained at the Nulato post, taking a common law wife from the local people.[14] While the record states that Deriabin was manager of the Nulato post for ten years, it should be remembered that he lived in this part of Alaska as an employee of the Company for approximately sixteen years. He had volunteered to travel with Glazunov on earlier expeditions to the Yukon. Deriabin, an experienced trader, is also reported to have conducted trade on the Koyukuk River and eastward on the Yukon to the confluence of the Tanana River, where the Natives gathered annually for a well documented trade fair. It is possible that Deriabin also travelled to the Yukon Flats. Accounts recorded by the Catholic priests (Barnum 1897; Jette 1914) state that Deriabin was not very popular in the Native community. However, this may have been due to their use of materials published by Ivan Petroff [Petrov] (1900),[15] for as Katherine L. Arndt, a researcher at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, pointed out in personal communications (1994), "the Russian-American Company would investigate any rumors of inappropriate conduct to insure peaceful and profitable relationships with the Native trade."

In addition to his interest in the fur trade, Deriabin most certainly was attempting to locate the source of the British goods which were by late 1840s-1850s finding their way to the area through the Natives. Unfortunately there is limited documentation on Deriabin's activity while manager of the Nulato post. It is known that he made one overland trip to the Koyukuk River country but became suspicious of the overly hospitable Natives and abruptly terminated his trip (Arndt, personal communication, 1994). It was probably during Deriabin's journey in 1845-1846, that Ivan Zakharov, a Creole, served as baidarshchik at Nulato. Deriabin was again assigned this position in 1846 which he then held until his death in 1851. From 1848 to 1851, Aleksandr Shcherbakov, another employee of the Russian-American

Company, served as clerk to Deriabin at the Nulato post.

In 1851, the Evenk,[16] Grigorii Nikitin escorted the British surgeon, Edward Adams, from Mikhailovskii to the Nulato post in response to a message that the trading center had come under attack by the Koyukon Indians. Being familiar with the people and the area due to his earlier travels with Zagoskin, Nikitin was assigned Deriabin's position as manager of the post. Nikitin, who had recently retired from the Russian-American Company service and married a Native woman from the Mikhailovskii Redoubt area, agreed to serve only as a temporary replacement. The creole, Larion Chubarov, was appointed Nikitin's clerk.

Later that year, Nikitin was replaced by Ivan Serebrennikov who managed the post from 1851 to approximately 1852. Serebrennikov was not well liked by the Natives, therefore, as Company policy dictated, he was recalled to Mikhailovskii for investigation into complaints received (Arndt 1986). It is uncertain what the investigation revealed. What is known is that Serebrennikov was relieved of his duties. As already mentioned, it was the policy of the Russian-American Company to maintain positive relations with the Natives to induce their support in the fur trade, therefore, any complaints regarding abuse, mistrust or negative attitudes were not tolerated.

Serebrennikov was replaced at Nulato by Semen Parfent'ev in 1852. Parfent'ev served as baidarshchik until 1854, assisted by Aleksandr Ivanov until 1853. Ivanov had been appointed as assistant to Serebrennikov in 1851. The records are unclear as to the circumstances during this period. However, Grigorii Nikitin, mentioned above, was again assigned to the Nulato as baidarshchik from 1854 to 1859. From 1859 to 1861, Nikandr Makurin managed the post. During this period an interesting entry is found in the journal of Father Netsvetov, the Russian Orthodox priest at Ikogmiut. The entry on April 3, 1861, reports:

> ...a murder at the Nulatovskaia, Russian odinochka. Two Russians deserted the Nulato post because of dissatisfaction with their bairdarshckik. Later on,

> one of them, Anisim Kolesov, killed his comrade, the company employee Efim Bogachev, and joined the savages, the Koiukon [Kuyukontsy] and remains with them (Black 1984:421).

Kolesov was eventually apprehended and sent to Sitka for adjudication (Ibid: 423, 427). Based on this information, it is probable that the persistent oral tradition of Russian cruelty is based on the behavior of Makurin, who was replaced in 1861 and the former manager Serebrennikov, mentioned previously. The remainder of 1861 found Koz'ma Stroganov in charge of affairs at Nulato. Stroganov served until 1862 when he was relieved by Pavel Mikriukov. Over the next three years, Mikriukov was assisted by the "traveling starosta" Ivan Pavlov. It is known that Pavlov[17], a Creole, served from 1865 to 1867 when Alaska was purchased from Russia. Pavlov married a Native from the Nulato area. He elected to remain in Alaska after the purchase. Together Pavlov and his wife, Marina, had nine children, many of whom are integrated into the present Athabaskan population of interior Alaska (Callahan 1975:127-128). One son, Minook, later would test the U. S. judicial system claiming his right to own property in the territory of Alaska (Gsovski 1950:73-86; Miller 1981:208, 211).

This review of the Russian-American Company personnel at Nulato illustrates Company activity as they penetrated the indigenous trade network. To some degree it also demonstrates the desire of the Company to maintain good trade relations with the Natives. While Company policy dictated peaceful relations with the Natives, it is apparent that there were some who deviated from established norms. While published sources document probable tensions among Company personnel, which were eliminated or addressed through the policies of the Company, dissatisfaction among the Native population is reflected in oral testimony. It should be remembered that the Natives classified all personnel of the Russian-American Company as "Russians" regardless of their ethnic affiliation. While the Hudsons Bay Company was present in Alaska during this time, no mention of their activity has surfaced in oral narratives

from the Nulato area. These omissions make it difficult to determine the source of the persistent traditions which refer to the mistreatment of Natives by the Russians. Is it possible that the presence of these foreigners in the indigenous trade network disrupted their economic structure? Did inter-ethnic marriages disrupt the social order? How did these changes affect the political structure of the Native Alaskans? What role did the language barrier have? In looking at the rapid culture change which occurred in the Native population with the arrival of foreign traders, explorers, whalers, and missionaries, it is possible to conclude that penetration of their long established indigenous trade networks certainly impacted the social order of the Native inhabitants. However, to understand the complex motivations of internecine conflicts, it is not sufficient to focus on economic pressures and social stress. Understanding the ideological system of the Koyukon is essential, particularly in view of the fact that these conflicts were often conceptualized as "shaman wars", telepathic challenges, or power contests between spiritual intermediaries, called *deyenenh* in Koyukon. In the case of the 1851 conflict at *Noolaaghedoh* a well orchestrated retaliation was organized by the Indians of *Kodeelkakkat* on the Koyukuk River in response to a perceived disruption of their social order by a *deyenenh* from *Hogholedlenh Denh*. In addition it is necessary to understand how the Koyukon conceptualized their social structure, based on complex interplay of tripartite clan division and local territorial loyalties. The territorial units will be discussed first.

Chapter 5: Athabaskans of Western Alaska and Their Territories

The area pertinent to this research was in the nineteenth century occupied by several distinct groups who clearly recognized the boundaries of their territories. The boundaries of different Athabaskan groupings have been a subject of long standing scholarly dispute. From the very beginning of their penetration of the area, the Russians were well aware of the multitude of linguistic groups inhabiting the Alaska interior. While aware of their linguistic boundaries, the Russians were also cognizant of the political boundaries between groups speaking closely related languages or dialects. In referring to several Athabaskan peoples, the Russians as a rule used Yup'ik (Central Alaskan Yupik Eskimo) ethnonyms. As already mentioned, in very early sources the inhabitants along the upper Unalakleet River and beyond were designated by the Russians as Ulukagmiut (Glazunov as cited by Kashevarov in Khlebnikov 1994), and the inhabitants of the Yukon upstream from Paimuit as Ingalit. Zagoskin (1967:192-197) classified all the Indians east of Anilukhtakpak [Ghost Creek near Holy Cross] as "true Ingalit", while recognizing the existence of linguistic variation among those living on the Kaltag Portage, the Lower Innoko and Anvik, and the Yukon towards Nulato. But he also noted distinct political boundaries between these Native groups, particularly among the people living on the Yukon in the area of Vazhichagat[18], a settlement near the entrance to the Shageluk Slough. Below, I present the Athabaskan concepts of the groups involved in the Nulato conflict directly or affected indirectly.

A. Lower Innoko-Anvik residents and their land

The people of the lower Innoko traveled to the coast "by way of [the Yukon to] Vazhichagat, then along a mountain stream that flows into the Yukon, almost at the latitude of the village they reach the upper waters of the Anvik; from there the trail continues in the same direction followed by Glazunov on his first trip in 1833.

The crossing from Vazhichagat to Kliktarik takes about three days under normal conditions (Zagoskin 1967:191). The mouth of the Anvik River is approximately fifteen miles downstream from Vazhichagat. According to VanStone (1979:53), the village Zagoskin identified as Vazhichagat, abandoned and presumably eroded by the action of the Yukon River, was located at the confluence of Shageluk Slough and the Yukon River. The Shageluk Slough [Tstseyaka Slough] forms a channel from the Yukon to the upper reaches of the Innoko in the vicinity of the former Holikachuk village. While the Anvik people conducted most of their trade at the coastal settlement of Kliktarik, it appeared that they did not venture much further inland than the junction of the Innoko [Shiltonotno] River with the Shageluk [Tstseyaka] slough.

B. Kaiyuh residents and their land

The population south and southeast of the Yukon and along the upper Innoko drainage were called Takayaksa or Takaiaksa by the Russians. The Natives identified themselves as *Kaiyuh hut'aane*, or people of the Kaiyuh area. Many of these people moved to the Yukon during the summer fishing season and their fish camps could be found from east of Nulato to southwestern settlements in the vicinity of *Soltol Dinh*, known later as Blackburn to the whites.[19] Here Zagoskin noted a linguistic boundary "between two tribes of Ttynay" [*Denaa*]. This boundary was further evidenced by the attack and destruction of a settlement eleven miles further downstream which was reportedly perpetrated by the *Kaiyuh hut'aane* the previous year. Their scourge was also felt by residents of Vazhichagat who informed Zagoskin that "during the past year" many of their able bodied men had been killed by *Kaiyuh hut'aane* raids on separate fish camps (Zagoskin 1967:190-191).

Jetté later provided a comprehensive description of the Kaiyuh Region in the Geographical manuscript (pp. 29-32). After describing the Kaiyuh mountains he offered the following discourse of the area:

In some places as for instance, opposite the mouth of the Melorozi River,

> these mountains come close to the Yukon, but they are generally separated from it by a tract of alluvial plains intersected by streams of various sizes and studded with innumerable lakes. The breadth of the plain-tract varies, being on the average from 20 to 60 miles. A portion of this tract, beginning at *Ranoytseloyoten*, some 10 miles above Nulato, and terminating at *Rotolkakat*, about 63 miles below Nulato, is what I call the Kayar Region. It was within remembrance of the older Ten'a, the habitat of a once numerous tribe, and was called by them "Kayar", i.e. "the settlement", or "the camp". Hence they themselves became known to the first explorers as the Kaiyuh (i.e. Kayar) Indians. The remnants of this tribe have now practically deserted the place of their former habitat, and have all migrated to the Yukon. They constitute the main part of the population of the Yukon villages, from Nulato down to *Madzatetsel'ihten*[20] [28 miles below current Kaltag] and *Soltolten*[21] [*Soltol Denh* in current orthography, "Blackburn", 91 miles below current Kaltag].

C. Kaltag Portage residents and their land

As mentioned earlier, Zagoskin utilized the term Ulukagmut[22] or "true Ingalit"[23] when referring to the inland Natives of the Kaltag-Unalakleet Portage. He also furnished the following information on their territorial boundaries:

> ...They never go further down the Yukon than below the village of Vazhichagat or Makaslag but by means of the Tstseyaka Slough they go fairly far up the Shiltonotno River which is called in its lower reaches the Chagelyuk (Zagoskin 1967:137).

However, by the mid-1840s, the Russians were recognizing the people of the Kaltag Portage by their autononym, *Denaa hut'aane* or real people (Zagoskin 1967:190). On the other hand, the Catholic priests in the 1870s refer to the same people as *Tlaamaas hut'aane*, people from the *Tlaamas* area. Based on earlier correspondence by Lecorre, which is found in Jetté's unpublished manuscript, "On the Migration of the

Ten'a", Jetté referred to those Natives living on the Kaltag-Unalakleet Portage as "*Tlamaas hut'aane*, a mixture of Ten'a and Eskimo blood, who formed a small group of mixed breed, the offspring mostly of Ten'a women that had been taken by the Eskimo after these had killed their husbands in war". *Tlaamaas* is the Koyukon term for the slate used to make the semi-lunar women's knives. According to Jones (1986:72) the name *Tlaamaas* refers to a prominent landmark on the Kaltag Portage:

> A high mountain on the coastal slope of the Kaltag Portage, 60 miles from Kaltag or 30 miles to Unalakleet. It is the westernmost of the series over which the trail crosses, and westward of it lies bare tundra of about 25 miles...The mountain is compared to a *tlaamaas* on account of its rounded ridge.

Jetté further described the Kaltag Portage thus:

> This is an overland trail from Kaltag to Unalaklit, crossing over the divide between the valley of the Yukon and Norton Sound. It follows the valley of the Kaltag River, passes the divide, and runs down to the sea coast along the Unalaklit River. It is about 90 miles in length, and presents two slopes, the one draining into the Yukon, about 32 miles long, the other draining into the Bering sea, some 52 miles in length. A flat space of about 5 or 6 miles, separates them. The most prominent landmark on the portage is the mountain known to Indians as *Sestsi'ka [Ses Tseega']*, and to whites as Old Woman mountain. According to my estimate the distance from Kaltag to this mountain is 42 miles, and from it to Unalaklit, 48 miles...Making a total length of 90 miles on the whole portage (Jette, "On the Geographical Names of the Ten'a", p.26).

As previously stated, these people were avid entrepreneurs who made trade excursions from the sea coast to the Yukon, and the upper and lower reaches of the Innoko River by way of the Anvik River to the settlement of Vazhichagat. Another overland passage to the Yukon used by these early travelers was from the village on the

Unalakleet River, called Ikvalkhak [Iktigalik] by Glazunov. In Koyukon the village of Iktigalik is known as *Admellek Denh* and will be discussed later. This route, considered the shortest crossover from the Yukon to the coast, passed through the settlement of Kuikhkhoglyuk situated on the tributary, Ttutago. In 1837, Glazunov and Malakhov noted a village of the same name also existed at the terminus on the Yukon. In current terminology the Ttutago is known as the Chirosky River.

Still another portage to the Yukon, known as the middle crossing, began at *Ses Tseega'* [Tstsytseka in Zagoskin] Mountain[24] and terminated at the populous *Kaiyuh hut'aane* village, *Kakhokgotna*[25], situated on the Yukon. Malakhov used this overland route in 1838. This village was abandoned following the smallpox epidemic of 1838 and overgrown with grass by the time of Zagoskin's travels in the 1840s. Oral tradition acknowledges the shifting of Native populations based on disruptions from epidemics, internecine conflicts, and the presence and establishment of European trade centers along the Yukon River. The oral account in chapter ten supports the contention that the Native population massacred at *Noolaaghedoh* in 1851 were primarily residents from the Kaltag Portage. Adams' journal (MS 1115) and the records of the Russian Orthodox Church (MF 139, reel 388) also identify a number of the Native victims as residents of the Portage. In his Geographic manuscript (p. 5), Jetté confirms that most of the *Tlamaas hut'aane*, "perished at the Nulato Massacre. The remnants still live on the Kaltag portage, at *Atemelleken*". Jetté describes the settlement of *Atemellekten* [*Ademellek Denh* in current orthography] on the "Siroska" River:

> Locality and village on the coast slope of the Kaltag portage, 70 miles from Kaltag or 20 to Unalaklit. Better known to the whites under its Eskimo name Ulukaq which means 'place where one gets the stone for ulus'. The place is also known as Siroska's from the name of Siroska, a native living there.

To this description of *Ademellek Denh*, Jones (1986:74) adds this translation from Koyukon:

...place of the last sleep (before reaching Unalakleet).

These names are verified by Jones (1986) and by elder Koyukon speakers from the village of Kaltag who trace their descent to John Siroska, the individual whose name the river bears. Siroska, born in 1853 at *Ademellek Denh*, was also known as *Sayereltar* by the Koyukon and in the Roman Catholic census compiled by Jetté (File Box IV: p.39).

D. Koyukuk-Kateel residents and their land

The people living along the lower reaches of the Koyukuk River and its tributaries were the least discussed in early literature. Zagoskin mentions their presence along the tributaries of the Koyukuk. However his journey coincided with the caribou hunting period of these people, therefore, many of the people were dispersed throughout the hills to the west of the Koyukuk river. The information provided by Zagoskin was later expanded by Lieut. Henry T. Allen of the Second United States Cavalry who explored the Copper, Yukon, and Koyukuk rivers in 1885. The salient aspects of these discussions are the geographic descriptions of numerous lakes and streams which constitute the Koyukuk Flats. Of particular interest in the context of this paper, are the rivers Gisasa, and Kateel which flow eastward from the inland slopes of the Nulato hills, a relatively low mountain range which separate the Koyukuk valley from the Bering sea coast. These streams north of the Unalakleet, Shatoolik, and Nulato Rivers, [see Map 2 and Map 3] run relatively parallel to them, but are further north. They provide access to the coast either through a route which connects with the Buckland River or one which intercepts the Nulato, Shaktoolik, and Unalakleet Rivers. Zagoskin recorded the information he gathered in 1844, from the Natives along the Gisasa River:

> According to the Natives, the *Kalyalyakhtna* River [present day Gisasa] flows out of the coastal mountains from the west by southwest and near its source approaches Nulato, but whether there is a portage from it to Norton Sound I

could not discover (Zagoskin 1967:151).

The residents of this region were called *Yoongge hut'aane* or Co-Yukon by early explorers. Today they are known in literature as Koyukon or speakers of the Central Koyukon dialect. According to an unpublished manuscript at the Alaska Native Language Center (Jones Ms), Koyukon elders and former residents of the Kateel River stated these populations moved to the Yukon River in the early 1900s, forming the current day village of Koyukuk.

Jetté distinguished on the basis of linguistic and social criteria "lower and upper tribes" among the Koyukon. Most frequent criterion used for delineating such boundary is linguistic: language, or dialect, i.e. "speech community". Social criteria such as presence or absence of clan structure were also utilized and debated (Jetté 1907:401; Petroff 1884:161; Osgood ; Loyens 1964:134).[26] While Jetté was correct in recognizing linguistic boundary, he erred in his social criterion of clan structure. It was he who introduced into anthropological literature the notion that the "upper tribe" had a tripartite clan structure, while the "lower tribe" did not. Jetté failed to recognize the presence of an identical clan structure among the people he designated, "the lower tribe", that is the people of the Kaiyuh area.

In reality, political boundaries were well delineated by the Natives utilizing emic criteria with each polity designated by a specific autonym. From the emic perspective, the Athabaskan people, regardless of dialectal variances, designate themselves as *tl'eeyegge hut'aane*, the people of one language. The various dialects served to identify the geographic origin of the speaker, much like the "southern drawl" or "Boston accent" does, and the speaker's society or polity: the use of a variant dialect signaled the presence of a stranger or possible enemy in your midst. All of the groups described above participated in inter-group trade to be discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter 6: Indigenous Trade

The incoming Russian traders found that the Natives were familiar with tobacco, beads, and iron. They interpreted the presence of these items among the Natives as evidence that indigenous intercontinental trade existed prior to the arrival of the Russian fur traders. Such reports of early Russian explorers such as Glazunov, Kashevarov, and Zagoskin are substantiated by Native oral narratives. A complex indigenous trade network existed between the inland Natives and the coastal people and between the latter and the Chukchi Peninsula (Vrangel [Wrangell] 1835; see also Golovko and Schweitzer 1994). These reports also indicate that through inter-ethnic marriage, alliances were established even between ethnic groups who often considered themselves traditional enemies. Glazunov mentions that in the fall of 1833, he met a group of inland Natives at the mouth of the Unalakleet River who were waiting for the arrival of the Aziagmuit, of Sledge Island, to commence trade. These inland Natives were identified as Uliukagmiut (Khlebnikov 1994:329) or residents of Ulukaq[27] settlement, a community on the coastal slope of the Kaltag Portage seventy miles from Kaltag or twenty miles to Unalakleet. Zagoskin later described the "Ulukagmyut" as middle men in the indigenous trade network which existed between the inland Natives and those along the coast:

> Settling on the routes between the coast and the Yukon, the Ulukagmyut naturally became middlemen in the relations between the Malegmyut and the natives of the interior. They never engaged in hunting, but spent all their time in trading or traveling. Intermarrying with the coastal people, they took over some of their customs and beliefs, and these they passed on to their clansmen on the Yukon...every single one of them is an excellent trader. As it is a matter of indifference to them by what means they get rich, they take by force or buy at their own price what they cannot acquire by trade or by shamanistic manipulation (Zagoskin 1976:137).

It appears that significant changes were occurring in the area north and west of *Noolaaghedoh* during the mid-nineteenth century with the residents of the Kaltag Portage attempting to gain control of the Anvik River trade with the Aziagmiut, and the Norton Sound trade with the Malimiut, the Inupiat of Norton Sound. Zagoskin and Kashevarov both noted the crafty skills of these indigenous traders while alluding to the role of the spiritual intermediaries in the economic and political structure of Native societies:

> Up to now the Azzhiagmiut have misled the natives about their inexhaustible riches in tobacco, beads and iron items, saying that the tobacco grows on their island [Aziiak], the beads and ironware are found in the lakes and that using certain spells only certain specially chosen women can obtain them. Despite our assurance that the Azzshiagmiut are deceiving them, the natives believe them from habit (Khlebnikov 1994:337).

In spite of the fact that the Russians had established a post at Ikogmiut in 1836 and began visiting Nulato by 1838, the inland Natives continued to turn to the Malimiut[28] of Norton Sound for their trade goods, particularly for reindeer skins from Chukotka Peninsula. This demand was noted by Zagoskin on his 1842-44 expedition to the Koyukuk and Upper Yukon Rivers. He agreed with earlier administrative recommendations that in order to redirect the indigenous trade the Russian-American Company should increase their stock of caribou/reindeer skins at their trading post on the mouth of the Yukon River. Because of the European demand for felted beaver hats, the Russian-American Company saw an opportunity to acquire more beaver pelts by making beaver the medium of exchange for caribou or reindeer hides (Zagoskin 1967:81, 102).

Zagoskin's assignment was to establish by which route communication between the Koyukon and the Malimiut of Norton Sound was maintained. During his excursion to the Koyukuk River, he was able to determine that a trade route existed between the Kateel River and the Buckland River which lead to the Norton Sound and

Hotham Inlet trading center (1967:154).[29] Oral tradition confirms the existence of inter-ethnic contact among the residents of northwest Alaska[30]. The Koyukon maintained intergroup trade networks through *seghok'elaay*,[31] a very special friendship which is akin to blood brotherhood or kinship by extension. These relationships are a life-time bond between two people of the same gender but at home in different social units, who acknowledge one another as brother or sister. This perception of kinship ties is not necessarily based on "blood" or biological relatedness. *Seghok'elaay* are established for social contact as well as trade and economic pursuits with members of other territorial units. The individual bond by *seghok'elaay* provided a means of access and communication across territorial boundaries and served as a means to maintain diplomatic relationships. As Correll (1972) noted, the extend of the indigenous trade network can hardly be over emphasized. The magnitude, intensity, and efficiency of trade relations in northwest Alaska is discussed in detail by Burch (1971), Burch and Correll (1972), Ray (1967), Smith 1968), and Spencer (1959). As the Russian fur traders infiltrated the indigenous trade network from the west, British entrepreneurs, particularly the Hudsons Bay Company, competed for the fur trade from the east.[32] Whaling ships, skirting the coasts of northern Alaska by the mid-nineteenth century, also contributed to imported trade goods among the Natives. The presence of foreign trade goods created economic pressures on the indigenous trade system and it is suggested that there was growing potential for indigenous conflict during this period.

As the early traders introduced advanced technology to the Native population, particularly the steel axe, so too did these foreigners introduce illness and epidemics which resulted in mass depopulation of many Native societies. The chaotic changes which occurred among the Koyukon had far-reaching implications. Many of the community hunters, philosophers, and keepers of the culture had succumbed to the smallpox epidemic during the 1830s. The remaining population often relocated. Many oral accounts describe the messages received through inspirational functionaries

regarding prescribed action during these periods of cultural stress. However, attempts to maintain their social structure was challenged by persistent tribal conflicts and raids as tension and confusion arose from the rapid changes occurring in their world. While former lifestyles were eased by incorporating advanced technology, and foreign trade goods into their culture, these same innovations indirectly created additional stresses on the social structure of the Koyukon and affected inter-group relations.

Chapter 7: Inter-Group Politics

As stated in preceding sections, Alaskans both coastal and interior dwellers, engaged in extensive trade long before the advent of the Europeans. There were complex networks of inter-group and inter-continental trade, with several coastal, notably Kotzebue Sound and Norton Sound groups controlling inter-continental trade with the Siberian Eskimo and Chukchi along well established long-distance routes of communication[33]. It follows that inter-group relations, both among the various Athabaskan political units, and between the Athabaskans and the various Eskimoan groups were maintained over considerable time, extending for centuries or more. The nature and dynamics of this interaction, to my knowledge, have not been examined in depth. One of the mechanisms that maintained inter-ethnic relations was apparently, as mentioned above, inter-marriage which created kinship ties. This postulated system of alliances based on inter-group kinship ties was not static, but subject to constant pressures. During the nineteenth century (and probably in earlier times) population shifts in northwest Alaska, involving Yup'ik, Inupiat, and Athabaskans generated inter-group tensions and a need to restructure the alliances which existed earlier. It is not unheard of in oral tradition that raids were made on unsuspecting travelers, in order to obtain their garments to barter with the early explorers. Based on the Koyukon practice of family revenge this resulted in or perpetuated internecine conflicts. Revenge was obligatory as Koyukon ideology holds that the soul of one who dies a sudden death is lost or mis-guided in his journey to the afterlife. This affects the group as a whole. By avenging the death of a loved one, the soul is freed to continue the journey and thus social order is restored. It is necessary, therefore, to look at the clan structure and how the clan system is tied to the Koyukon ideology.

In Koyukon ideology, the basis of social structure was the tripartite clan division. Traditionally, the Koyukon maintained clan solidarity along matrilineal kinship ties. Through this kinship system, individual statuses and behavioral roles are

established. This complex distinguished kinsmen or those perceived to be related from those who were not. The clans were dispersed throughout the Koyukon territory in localized clan segments and inter-group linkages were maintained through means of the same clan. But as with many other Athabaskan groups (Helms 1965, 1985, Ellanna and Balluta 1992) political units or polities among the Koyukon were defined geographically, on the basis of joint occupation of a given territory. Although there was an association between localized clan segments and residence in specific areas, there was no conception of clan "ownership" of particular resources or the locations in which they were found. Local settled clan segment as a whole had usufruct rights. Food storage areas and structures were associated with particular families.

Political strength and spiritual unity, characteristics tightly entwined in Koyukon ideology, reinforced the unity of clan members (Songs & Legends H91-12-224). However, clan and local loyalties did not always coincide. Wide ranging alliances were created through intermarriage ties between clans and even between members of different ethnic groups (Eskimo and Athabaskan). However, inter-ethnic marriages created alliances which were interpreted differently by the participant groups. Eskimos were patrilineal, and Athabaskans matrilineal, with each side acknowledging kin according to their own system. The significance of this is best demonstrated by the Koyukon practice of revenge for any injury or insult to family members. In such cases, Athabaskan women married in Eskimo society, as well as their children, were protected by their Athabaskan kinsmen. Native tradition tells of clan members relocating to settlements closer to women who have been captured and taken as wives by Eskimo men. On the other hand, these accounts also address the on-going feuds maintained by kinsmen of those lost through internecine conflict. The conflicts, influenced by perceptions of clan obligations and local loyalties, were often surprise raids on small bands of unsuspecting hunters. Many of these events were recorded by the early Russian traders who entered the area in the late 1830s. It is clear that the practice of family feuds had a dramatic impact on Koyukon society.

Since death by illness was interpreted as an attack by an enemy, it had to be avenged. As epidemics increased, the death toll added to the chaotic situation at hand. The Koyukon attempted to restore order to their world through the only method they were familiar with, their spiritual intermediary, the *deyenenh*, who could cause the enemy to perish or inflict punishment for perceived spiritual attack.

Chapter 8 Ideology and World View

The holistic structure of Koyukon society and culture is exemplified in their ideology and world view. All aspects of their existence are encompassed in their perception and conceptualization of psychic harmony "between humans [and all other beings] and all spatially defined aspects of the universe". Their cosmology explains the origin, structure, and destiny of the universe while their myths depict creation as an unbroken transformation process, the universe and nature evolving and propagating out of metaphysical beginnings. Man, all beings, and all elements of nature have both a psychic being and a physical presence. Associated with this conceptual structure are rites variously characterized as magic, animism, and animatism, as well as exemplifying phases of religious belief in polytheism and polydemonism. In my view, the Koyukon belief system and accompanying Koyukon ritual can probably be explained by means of the model of psychic dynamism proposed by Handy (1927). This "psychic dynamism" of nature is evidenced in the Koyukon concept of *senh*. The word *senh* refers to manifestations of the dynamic aspect of nature as centered, focused, and transmitted through the potency of nature, which might be characterized in western terms as an impersonal force inherent in all things. To the Koyukon *senh* is not merely power or energy, but procreative power derived from an ultimate source not personified but conceptualized as existing, diffused, transmitted, and manifested throughout the universe. Reference to this procreative power is found in Koyukon creation myths where *senh* is manifested in the form of the primordial being, *dotson'sa*, the great raven. This primal power was the original *senh* which is believed to be continuously passed on to the world as we know it. Accordingly, man is the product of *senh*, manipulated by a primordial being, who was instrumental in populating the world, creating land mass, oceans, lakes, rivers and bringing light to the world. *Senh* is evidenced in persons as power, strength, prestige, reputation, skill, dynamic personality, intelligence, luck, or accomplishment, and in things as

efficacy. Rocks, trees, water, and food are all conceptualized as having the capacity to produce a desired result or effect.

Koyukon belief stresses that in the distant past there was a time in the transition world when transformation of creatures was possible and all had transhuman aspects. Bear, wolf, wolverine, and lynx had two souls, like contemporary man, and could change from one form into another. Then the great flood followed. After the great flood, man and other forms of nature underwent change. Man became *denaa*, or human, with other forms of nature taking on their distinctive features as we know them now, with transformation capacity lost at least to ordinary humans. Humans were distinguished from other forms of nature by retaining the two souls both the vital essence, known as the breath soul or *nukk'umedze*, and a shadow soul known as the life force or *yeege'*, while the animals mentioned above retained only one soul.

Thus, the Koyukon conceive humans, as endowed with two souls, breath and shadow. Every person's primary or breath soul *nukk'umedze*, is the life giving soul which remains in the body until biological death occurs. Adjusting to their new environment after death, the breath soul or *nukk'umedze* wanders in a transitional realm or world after death, known as *naaghedeneelne*. After performance of *heeyo*, commonly referred to as a feast for the dead, the *nukk'umedze* departs the realm of *naaghedeneelne* to the realm of the sky or light, known in Koyukon as *tlaa noten*. This final journey prepares the *nukk'umedze* for reincarnation. The shadow soul or *yeege'* encompasses psychic self and is often associated with the realm of darkness. The shadow soul can travel outside the body and may be seen in dreams. It is susceptible to harm by outside forces.

Interaction between all forms of nature is dependent on *senh*. As *senh* imbues the universe in all its manifestations, all Koyukon religious concepts are centered on this concept. It is through *senh* that a symbiotic relationship or psychic dynamism between man and his environment is maintained. This religious principle or cardinal focus of the Koyukon religious system, permeates all aspects of Koyukon life. Bock

offers that "in most societies, religion is not a separate category of experience and action. There is, rather, a religious dimension to every part of life (1974:223)." His view that "the Western contrast between natural and supernatural is simply not relevant to the understanding of such societies" applies to Koyukon cosmology. Earlier Dorothy Lee stated that every cosmology includes ideas about the constitution of the world and about the various categories of beings that are believed to inhabit it, and their relationship to humankind:

> The world view of a particular society includes that society's conception of man's own relation to the universe, human, and non-human, organic and inorganic, secular and divine, to use our own dualism. It expresses man's view of his own role in the maintenance of life, and of the forces of nature. His attitude toward responsibility and initiative is inextricable from his conception of nature as deity-controlled, man-controlled, regulated through a balanced cooperation between god and man, or perhaps maintained through some eternal homeostasis, independent of man and perhaps of a deity. The way a man acts, his feeling of guilt and achievement, and his very personality, are affected by the way he envisions his place within the universe (Lee 1959:170).

In the Koyukon belief system, benevolent and malevolent powers exist in the world alongside of *senh*. We may go so far as to speak of this as a concept or principle of dualism in nature. Grounded upon and derived from the principle of dualism in nature, the Koyukon maintained a system of *hutlaane* or religious law. *Hutlaane* has a controlling influence over all phases of the life of the individual and the community. Breaking of *hutlaane* is considered physically dangerous as this creates a disturbance or imbalance of psychic unity of all things. The word *hutlaane* is also used as a warning, if an individual is thought to violate principles of appropriate behavior. But the meaning of such utterance is broader than a simple warning. It is a simultaneous reminder of the existence of cosmic harmony. To maintain this harmony, the moral

code, *hutlaane*, is used to restrict, to forbid, to set apart, or to avoid any disturbance of the balance, and at the same time to compliment and restore psychic harmony through performance of individual rites. Harmony is endangered by any disturbance of the equilibrium in an individual, either by a surcharge of *senh* or by a loss of the natural endowment of *senh*. Both have disastrous effects.

The Koyukon strive to maintain psychic harmony "between humans and all spatially defined aspects of the universe" the land and water, the world above and the world below maintain an intricate relationship to the Koyukon. This relationship is best conceptualized in the mid-winter healing ceremony known as *heeyo*. This ceremony is, as stated, commonly referred to as a feast for the dead, a memorial potlatch, or the stickdance. The last label refers to a dominant symbol used in *heeyo*. Prior to commencing discussion of the ceremony, background information on the spatial relationship mentioned above is necessary. The paradigm developed by Black (1972) will be modified to accommodate the spatial structure found in the Koyukon world view:

> The maintenance procedure involves a regular calendrically regulated "feeding" of the deity; the nature of the human/deity relationship was viewed as reciprocal: the deity, in its various aspects, supplied humans with their needs; the latter, in turn, "fed" the deity (Black 1972:73).

The Koyukon recognized, as stated earlier, a tripartite clan structure which is according to tradition, related to the conceptualized spatial structure mentioned above. I mentioned that Koyukon recognize the speakers of their language as one people, *tl'eeyegge hut'aane*, within this unity, there existed three families: *Medzeyh Te Hut'aane, Toneedze Gheltseelne,* and *Noltseen*. These terms can be translated as Caribou People, Middle of the Stream or Water People, and Bear or Copper People respectively.

In the origin stories, the Caribou people travelled a great distance, originating from caribou country. Their attire, made of caribou skins, testified to their origin.

The Koyukon view them as being connected with the sky and having power associated with light. The Copper people are associated with the earth and hard solid objects such as metal, iron and copper. Earth is also associated with darkness. The progenitor of the Copper people was represented by a Bear. Finally, the Water People are said to have travelled sunwise[34] over a great body of water. The progenitor of this group travelled as Marten man. He produced a string of dentalium shells to verify his origin. Water people are also associated with wood which maintains a relationship to the earth. Thus, the Koyukon conceptualize Water people as intermediaries between the Caribou people and the Copper People.

To repeat, the spatial ordering of this tripartite clan structure opposes the Caribou Clan which is associated with the sky and light and stands in opposition to the interior of the earth and darkness, associated with the human realm or earth and represented by the Bear Clan. The dominant symbol of *heeyo*, the spruce pole, is representative of the Water People and serves as a vehicle or intermediary for the soul being released from all earthly obligations. These families (clans) are symbolic of the tripartite structure found within the Koyukon world view: human, *naaghedeneelne*, and sky, *tlaa noten*, the outer dimension reached after the soul is released through *heeyo*. The ultimate journey, or preferred destination, of the souls is *tlaa noten*. From this perspective it becomes apparent that *heeyo* is a complex which reaffirms the symbiotic relationship "between humans and all spatially defined aspects of the universe". The *heeyo* ceremony was supervised by a *deyenenh*, an inspirational functionary equivalent in the colloquial usage to the term shaman. The primary tenets of the Koyukon belief suggest that the main function of these inspirational functionaries was to maintain psychic harmony in their universe.

The Koyukon recognize several categories of inspirational functionaries, including shaman, spirit mediums, and prophets. Each had a special role to play. The *k'eleek et'aanenh* or spirit mediums, possessed certain songs and had limited influence, while the *henaay* or prophets could foretell the future, and also had limited

means to influence the outcome. The *deyenenh* or shaman was the all powerful functionary, but each had his special area of expertise and spirit helpers. Since they were the community's main instruments of rapport with the life-giving power of *senh*, protection of their sanctity was important to the community as a whole. The rules or *hutlaane* governing the sanctity of these inspirational functionaries are by no means arbitrary. *Hutlaane* surrounding them are essential as the *deyenenh* would influence the *yeege'* of animals and objects. The notion that even a name contains the *yeege'* of the individual animal, plant, or object governs the laws of speech. Circumlocution is employed. Through the principles of psychic rapport, *hutlaane* was extended to include all things with which these inspirational functionaries came in contact: clothing, dwellings, personal possessions, land, as well as their spouses and family, who have a guardian spirit to protect them from harm or the ill wishes of another person. Because of this guardian spirit, people were ill advised to treat members of a *deyenenh's* family with disrespect. Furthermore, due to the connection with the spirit realm, the *deyenenh*, as a rule, does not participate in hunting activities. Other members of the community share their catch with him. Food and all things associated with its preparation and consumption were particularly *hutlaane* based on the belief that food taken into the *deyenenh's* body was a purveyor of influence, (i.e., the first salmon of the season was shared with the *deyenenh* as a guarantee for continued success; a young man's first catch was similarly distributed). An association between digested food and feces was also maintained. This is apparent in the performance of certain rites to obviate a curse or to intercept a curse. In such cases dog feces are an important component of the ceremony. The significance of dog emerges in several distant time stories where dog is personified as a symbol or purveyor of powerful influence. When *dotson'sa*, the great raven, was creating the world, a dog skin blanket was used as a protective shroud during the ceremony. Fattened dogs were sacrificed to *dotson'sa* as atonement. Other examples of the special role of dog are exemplified in the narrative of a young married couple who

tried unsuccessfully to raise a family. Upon pregnancy wife would self-abort. After several such incidents a ritual was performed to reverse the situation. A young dog pup was sacrificed. A portion of the flesh was then consumed by the expectant woman. The successful pregnancy produced a son who was cherished by his family. On reaching adulthood the young man was mysteriously sucked into the river to reappear later in the form of a dog. He was captured and wrapped with *senh taal'* (a grass mat used as a medicine blanket) and thus transformed back into human form (Songs & Legends H90-12-286). Koyukon belief holds that dog is the only animal which can hear and observe the spirits of the dead. The dog along with other powerful animal spirits, such as the bear or the loon, was a *deyenenh's* most important spirit helper. Other spirit helpers, such as the frog, were used to manifest the soul of a dead *deyenenh.*

It was not unheard of in Koyukon society, for one *deyenenh* to call on another to perform a ritual on a challenge. Such performances were believed to be spiritually taxing, leaving the performing *deyenenh* in a vulnerable position. If this *deyenenh* involuntarily lost his control of spiritual power, the challenging *deyenenh* attempted to gain such control for himself. This often created an imbalance or psychic disruption, whereupon the spiritual intermediary was called upon to restore the equilibrium. Sometimes this meant the destruction of the hostile *deyenenh.* In such cases, the bonds of kinship ties or clan membership served as a vehicle for unification for action across group boundaries (Songs & Legends: H91-12-224). This concept is illustrated in the following discussion of the Last Great Indian War.

Chapter 9: The Last Great Indian War

The practice of revenge for any injury or insult to family members was, by the Koyukon considered to be a necessary part of psychic harmony maintenance. In any conflict, the aid of a *deyenenh* was an absolute necessity. Oral tradition is laced with evidence of internecine conflicts, many of which address raids to avenge the death or insult of a family member. One such account was collected by Mark Badger (personal communication).[35] This account mentions the attack by "the Nulato Indians" on the Koyukuk River settlement of *Kelroteyet* [*Kelghoteyet*]. The atrocities committed on the women and children who remained in camp while the men were on a hunting expedition, is vivid in the memory of their descendants. Purportedly the trail of the hunting party was festooned with excoriated[36] parts of their women. This account probably refers to a conflict well documented by the early Catholic missionaries who date this event to approximately 1846. I specifically refer to Jetté's "Migration of the Ten'a" in which he discusses this conflict:

> On the Koyukuk River we find that about 1846 a party of Eskimo and allied Ten'a (*Tlamas-rotana*, [*Tlaamaas hut'aane*] from the Portage) massacred the Koyukuk Natives at *Kelroteyet*, and the reprisals for this slaughter we find recorded by whites as the Nulato Massacre, Feb. 16, 1851, in which a British naval office Lieut. J. J. Barnard of H. M. S. Enterprise sent in search of Sir John Franklin's expedition met with an untimely death (Jetté M/F 96, roll 34).

Jetté proceeds with his interpretation,

> Lest the reader would infer that these facts do not belong to a war between Ten'a and Eskimo, it will be good to observe that the people alluded to in both cases were the *Tlamas-rotana*, living on the overland Portage between Kaltag & Unalakleet, on the confines of the Eskimo and Ten'a territories; these presented a mixture of Ten'a and Eskimo blood, and formed a small group of mixed breed, the offspring mostly of Ten'a women that had been taken by the

> Eskimo after these had killed their husbands in war. They were commonly considered as Eskimos, although some Ten'a related to the women had settled among them and been incorporated in the group (Jetté M/F 96, roll 35).

An earlier version, which Jetté paraphrased from the French translation, was provided by Father Auguste Lecorre, of the Oblate order of Mary Immaculate, a Catholic priest from Canada who entered Alaska through the MacKenzie district in 1862. With evangelizing efforts in mind, Lecorre traversed the Yukon Athabaskan territory for many years and came to Mikhailovskii Redoubt in 1872 where he remained until 1874. On July 30, 1874, Lecorre recorded the following account of the 1846 incident:

> It will be noticed that in the massacre at *Kelroteyit* some Ten'a joined the assailants, against their brother Ten'a...the Unalaklit people are said to have killed some of their fellow countrymen (Lecorre 1875:122, 123).

It is interesting to note that neither Lecorre nor Jetté make any reference to the atrocities recalled in the version recounted to Mark Badger. The bitter memories stimulated by this account exemplifies the long term effects of internecine warfare.

As stated earlier, each *deyenenh* had an area of specialization or control of particular spirits deemed more helpful in particular areas, therefore, any disturbance to the order of Koyukon society was believed to be the result of particular spirits being manipulated by the controlling master. It is common knowledge among the Koyukon, that the *deyenenh* often challenged one another to gain control of what they perceived to be greater "powers" or to prevent these powers from passing on to a novice. Having discussed the background of Russian penetration into the trade network of Alaska's interior based on Euro-American sources, intergroup political and economic systems, and as a prelude to the chapter on the ideology and worldview view of the Koyukon, I now look at the accounts of "the last great war" provided by descendants of some members of the study group. In the 1970s, as part of the Songs and Legends Series of the Interior Athabaskans, the following story about the Nulato

War was recorded. I cite this story in full.

The Last Great Indian War[37]

It is said that it was the Koyukuk River people who did that [the Nulato Massacres] down from here. The Kaltag people had gone to Whaleback[38] *for a feast and gathering. Well, that's before our time. There is nobody [living] who knows about it first hand. But your grandfather John Brown's dad, his dad*[39]*..This man evidently was a deyenenh. He lived downriver from here.*[40] *He also traveled over to the place where the potlatch was being held. It is said that there was another deyenenh who lived at this place, one who submerges himself in the water.*

The medicine man from down here that I spoke of, began pressuring the other one, the one who submerges himself in the water. He kept insisting, "perform that ceremony that you are known for." However, he replied, "no, leave me be, I have finished my work under there", [in essence, "I am retired"]. Well, he eventually gave in to the pressure and said, "yes".

After it gets dark is when they "made medicine". He also had people who were his helpers. These helpers chopped a hole for him in the river ice. Then..starting in the house, he began his ritual. (He has not gone down to the waterhole yet. This is over there, over at Whaleback). When he finally reached a fervor through his singing, he went down to the waterhole. There he stood over the water. He kept hopping like on this water until he is pulled down into the water. Gradually, he is totally submerged.

Meanwhile, his helpers who are in the house continue to sing. They are singing his medicine songs, the songs to his spirit helpers. This river extends out to the coast. The mouth of this river is at Unalakleet. They hear him travelling toward the mouth of the river as a loon, until the sound fades in the distance.

Through the night all kinds of water animals noises are heard coming from the waterhole.[41] *Even the tokkaa' [red-necked grebe]. Towards morning his two helpers began to go outside checking for his return. Finally they heard him coming from a long way off.*

And then this is what happened--well, I'm telling the story the way I heard Clement's father[42] *tell it--and so it is said that he came back up through the water. From there they carried his body up the bank because he was just stiff. They carried him directly into the house. The people were still singing in the house.*

When he got his breath back he began dancing around the fire pit again, making medicine. Suddenly he stepped back from the fire pit and said to this man. It is said he asked him, "What was it you were blocking my path with?" Evidently, John Brown's grandfather urged him to perform this ceremony in order to weaken him.

During the night, the medicine man from down here who was visiting in the village kept coming into the house where the ceremony was being held. An old woman, who raised the deyenenh over there, also kept coming into the house while the ceremony was going on and noticed the man's sleeves rolled up and his arms were red with blood.

It was this man, the deyenenh from down here. His arms were red with blood. She didn't think anything of it initially. When she realized that he was attempting to interfere with the ceremony, she warned him, "don't do anything to harm him for he has relatives looking over him who have great power!"

The people stayed another night then returned to the Yukon. And just about two days later, the messengers came with the news that the deyenenh out there had died.

LS: *It is said that he [Kaltag deyenenh] was asked to burn him.*[43]

CB: *Yes, that's correct. Then he instructed the two messengers, "bring the dead*

deyenenh over here." So they returned home. When they came back with the body, they put him on a raised platform as directed.[44]

According to Clement's dad, it was said that he [Kaltag deyenenh] was seen bending over the coffin every day. Apparently he wasn't boxed up. The coffin was open. Even though the one in there was dead, he was talking to him. He was talking with this dead one. It was later revealed that he was talking about the people back Koyukuk River. It is said that he manipulated the spirit of the dead deyenenh to kill the people back that way [Koyukuk River area]. Finally, eventually they boxed him up.[45]

It is said that as the winter was going by, the people back at Kodeelkakkat were dying. This is the way it was told by Clement's father. Many people were dying there.

There were two brothers who lived there [Kodeelkakkat]. Both were deyenenh. Every evening these brothers would dance around the fire pit as they studied their situation. Initially they could find nothing to indicate the cause of death in their village. Finally they discovered the truth. They said that the power of the dead deyenenh, the one who was brought to the Yukon, was turned against the Kodeelkakkat people. It is said that his spirit power was thrown over this way [toward Kodeelkakkat].

They encountered his spirit over at Hugh Tleeneetonh Denh.[46] *There they began questioning him. They began to ask him if it was someone from the coast who turned his power this way. It is said they asked him, "Why are you doing this to us? Are you doing this of your own accord?" It is said that the one whose powers had been thrown over this way made a deep sigh and asked, "Is it you that I'm doing this to?"*

It is said that they told him, "Yes, you light up the sky with our people, but we will not harm you because it was not of your free will". It is said that they then told this dead deyenenh, "In the future, when something bad happens

you will help us. They then released him to return back toward the coast. It was said that the apparition of the Whaleback deyenenh then vanished. It evidently was his ghost that they sent back, it was his spirit. It is said that this is what happened to him.

There was only one man who stayed behind [this is later, when the people traveled to Noolaaghedoh for the feast in 1851]. The one whose Indian name was given to Jessie's father.[47] *His name was Mestaay. Jessie's father was named after this man called, Mestaay. This man also lived out that way. It is said that the deyenenh over there claimed that Mestaay was the only one who treated him kindly. He [Mestaay] was the only one who liked him.*

Since the people in his own village did not speak kindly of the deyenenh, it is probable that this deyenenh mis-used his powers. But only the one I mentioned earlier took care of him. In return it is said that this deyenenh protected him [Mestaay]. He said that if there ever comes a time when he [Mestaay] is in danger, may he have the heart [courage] of a shrew.[48] *This man was the only one who remained home while all the rest of the people came to the Yukon for the potlatch down here. It is said that these are the people who were killed down here. What few people lived down here were also killed.*

TS: Yes, meanwhile all the Kaiyuh people remained home.

CB: It is really something...this is really incredible. These women who go across there [the river] to set rabbit snares saw them, members of the war party. Up here, maybe about 1/2 mile up here where it slopes down is the place where they reported seeing them. But these men who lived down here [the Russian post] didn't believe the women. And at night...when the women go out at night to relieve themselves, these men were also whistling at them. They also reported this, but the men still did not believe them. Instead all they said was, "it is probably those boys from the village who go out and wait for you that

are whistling at you." It is said that it was the very next morning that they were attacked down here.[49]

A few days before the attack, a man and his wife are said to have gone to Kaiyuh. They had two daughters. This man told his wife that they were going to visit his sister. Tell your younger brother to come with us, he also said to his wife. So she went to see her younger brother. But he didn't want to go. He told his sister, "late today I am to be given a dish".[50] *She returned to her husband and reported what he said.*

Why should he wait for that, there will be many opportunities to receive a dish in the future, he snapped at his wife. Right there they departed. They then spent the night at a lake which was off the trail.

In the morning, the ground was covered with snow, the kind of snow known as k'ezaakk, "like powdered snow" [hoarfrost], fell during the night. Right there he said to his wife, "This is a sign that something bad has happened. I think the place we left has been attacked".

He then told his daughters to go over and check the trail. So they went over to the trail. There they saw strange snowshoe tracks going up the trail. There was one small snowshoe track with a larger one next to it. The tracks indicated the person was running. They returned to their parents and told them what they had seen. Again he said to them, "That place was attacked after we left."

Once again they set out on the trail. They went to T'egheInookkaakk'et.[51] *From there they went uphill and downstream to Sooge Ts'aatey, where the medicine man, whose son-in-law escaped the massacre*[52] *lived. All the people from Kaiyuh had gathered there. There all the men went to work and built a fort. Well, they built a wall all around and put a roof on it with timber.*

Meanwhile the women plied long string. They twisted sinew to string

through the trees as an obstruction to slow the warriors. It is said that this is what was done. Well, the news had already arrived up there.

The discovery of this account of the Last Great Indian War was an instrumental part of my research. As I discussed this story with village elders from Kaltag and Nulato, their memories were kindled, and accounts of their beliefs and the ritual killing of the *deyenenh* from *Hogholedlenh Denh* surfaced. As explained to me by the Koyukon elders, the ritual killing was tied to the belief that the spirit of the *deyenenh* does not depart with physical death. The physical detachment of the sensory organs was necessary to impair the control the *deyenenh* had over spirits. Adams' autopsy report on the victims at *Noolaaghedoh* verifies that the sensory organs of the *deyenenh* from *Hogholedlenh Denh* had been detached. According to Adams the people from the Kaltag area, afraid of another attack, awaited the arrival of his party from St. Michael before proceeding to *Noolaaghedoh* to recover the remains of their family members and "chief" (MS 1115). His journal collaborates oral tradition that the "parts of this *deyenenh* were gathered up". According to the oral tradition, his remains were buried on the bank of the Yukon at Kaltag.

Chapter 10: Discussion and Analysis

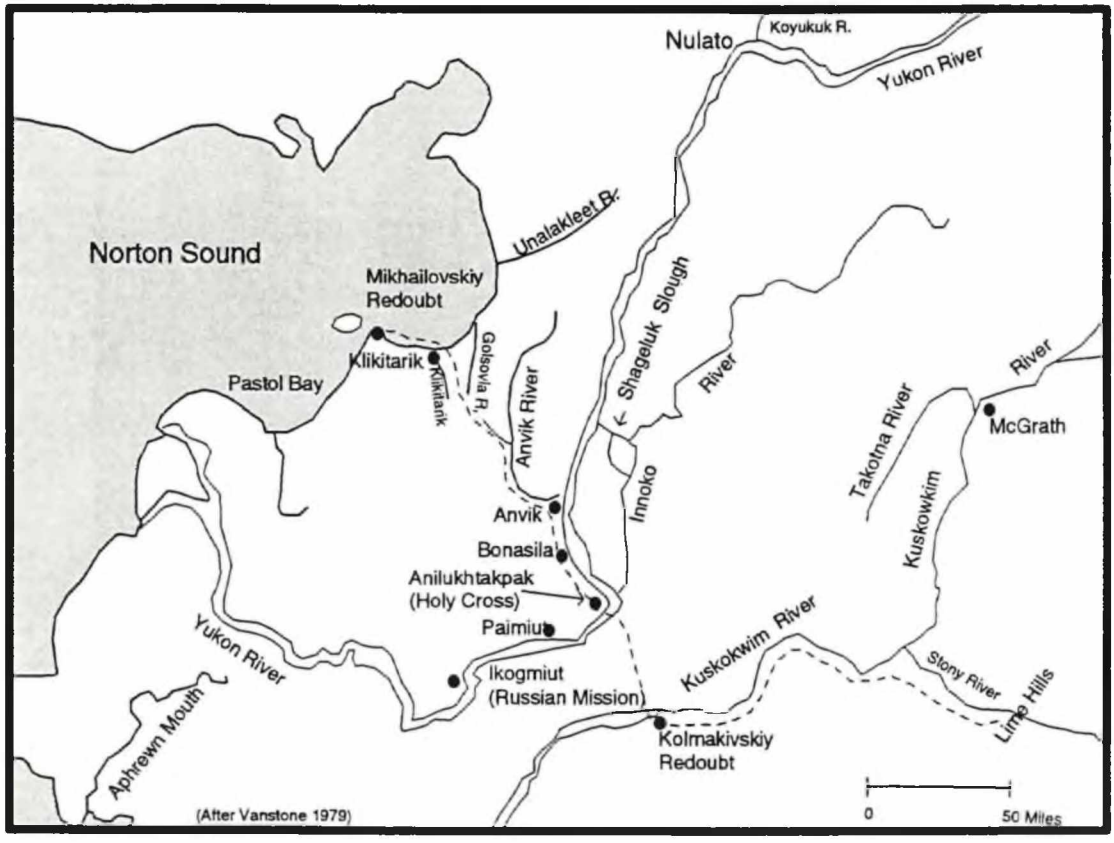
In investigating the Native understanding of the Nulato conflict of 1851, I found that to this day the conflict is perceived and explained in terms of Koyukon ideology. While it may be argued that the conflict was precipitated ultimately by economic and social post-contact dislocations, the Koyukon perceived it as a disturbance of their concept of universal psychic unity, an overarching conceptualization which encompasses all aspects of Koyukon world view. The social and cultural changes which were occurring raised concern among the Koyukon that the universe was out of balance and this imbalance was manifested in threats to their social order and their very existence. It was imperative in their view to regain control of their lives. The role of the spiritual intermediary, the *deyenenh*, in such restoration, was paramount.

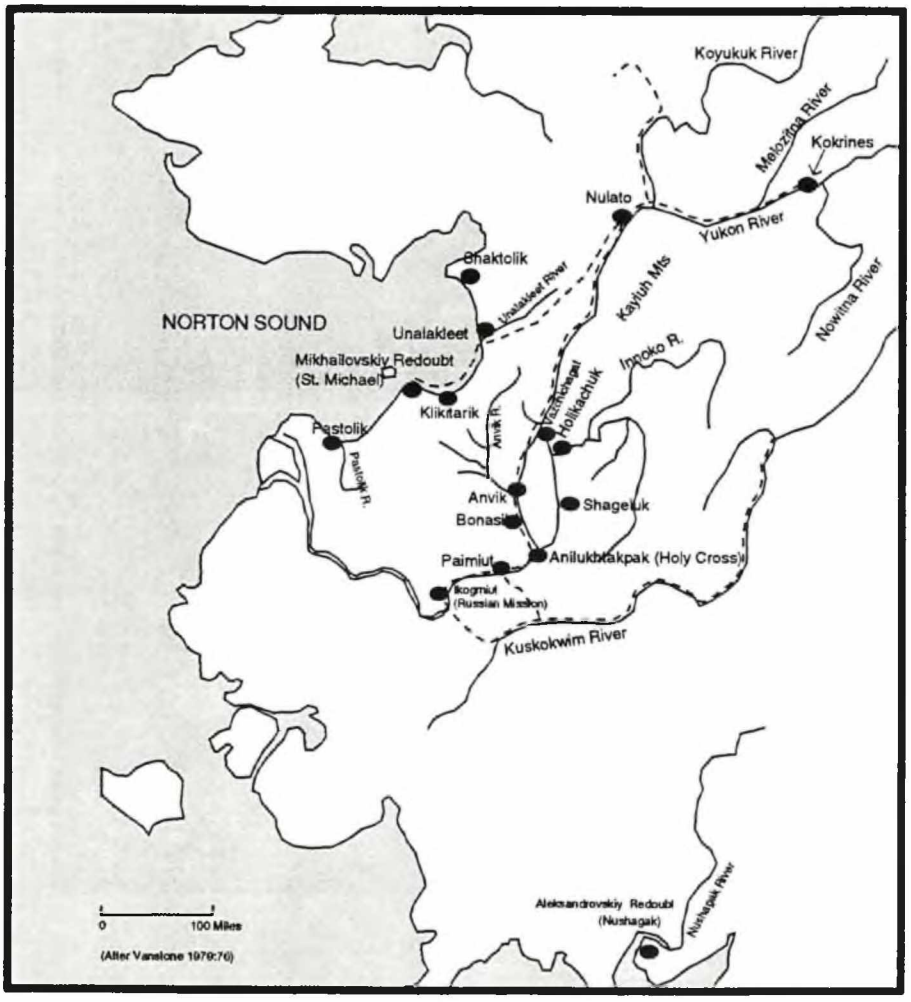
In all the narratives associated with the Last Great Indian War, the role of the *deyenenh* is stressed. There are stories told of those who did not attend this winter celebration on the advice of a *deyenenh*. In the account of the man who escaped, narrated by himself, his good fortune is attributed to the squirrel skin parka loaned to him by his father-in-law, a powerful *deyenenh* who foretold of danger and would not allow his daughter to attend the celebration at *Noolaaghedoh*. In the aftermath of the attack on *Noolaaghedoh*, the people in the Kaiyuh area, expecting another attack and seeking the protection of a *deyenenh*, congregated at *Sooge Ts'aatey*, a settlement where the above mentioned *deyenenh* lived. Oral traditions continue today which tell of the power that emanated from the grave of the *Hogholedlenh Denh* [Kaltag] *deyenenh*. Very vivid in the memory of many residents of Kaltag and Nulato is the young man, who being educated at the Catholic Mission at Holy Cross, denounced the Koyukon beliefs. Against the advice of village elders, he carved his initials in the birch tree which grew from the *deyenenh's* grave. That summer his body became covered with weeping lesions. The attempts of medical doctors and nurses to heal

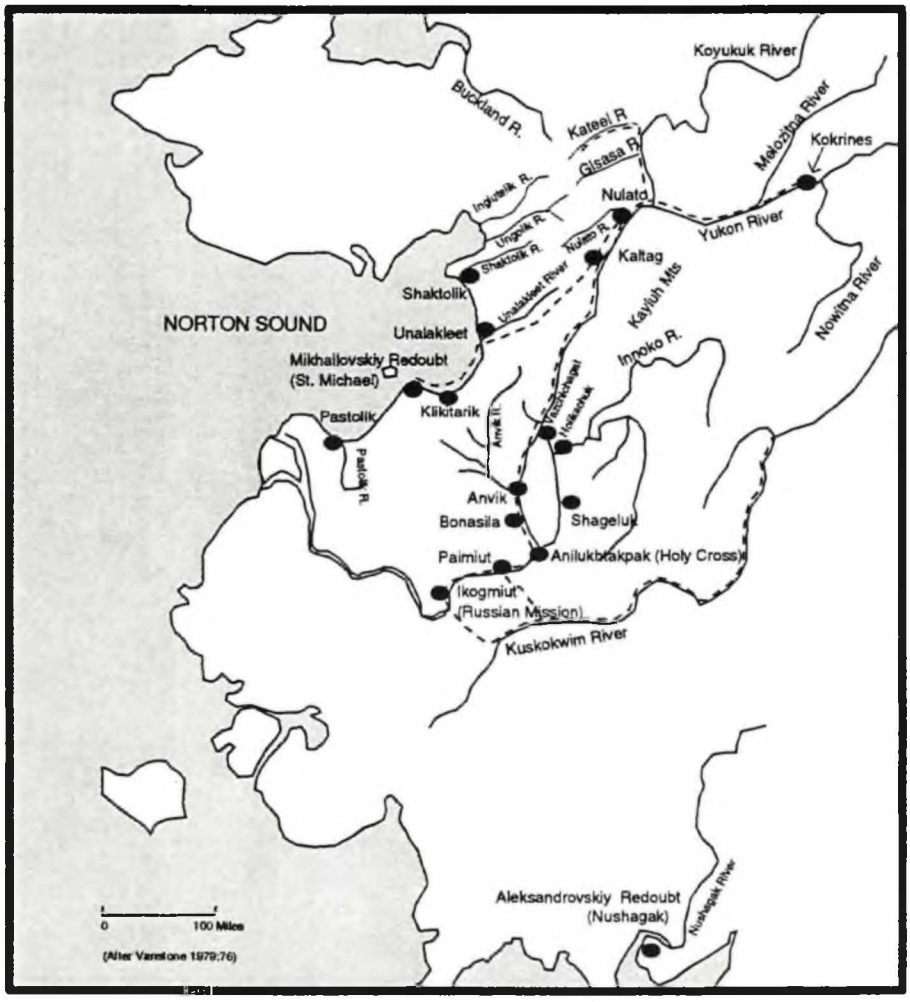
these sores were of no avail. In desperation, the family hired a Koyukuk River *deyenenh* and arranged for him to travel to Kaltag. Through his spiritual intervention, the *deyenenh* was perceived to have remedied the situation and restored harmony: the young man was healed. This was evidence of the *deyenenh's* ability to restore order in a wider sense. The disease afflicting the transgressor was seen as a demonstration of the power of the *Hogholedlenh Denh deyenenh* long time dead. By challenging or overcoming the effects wrought by the *Hogholedlenh Denh deyenenh* on this young man, the visiting *deyenenh* declared that he had also been rejuvenated, that he gained additional psychic strength. Within five years after this incident in the 1930s, the deceased *deyenenh's* grave was washed into the Yukon River during the annual spring floods. Just prior to the grave being washed away, a toad was seen hopping from the grave, a signal that the reign of this particular *deyenenh* was over.

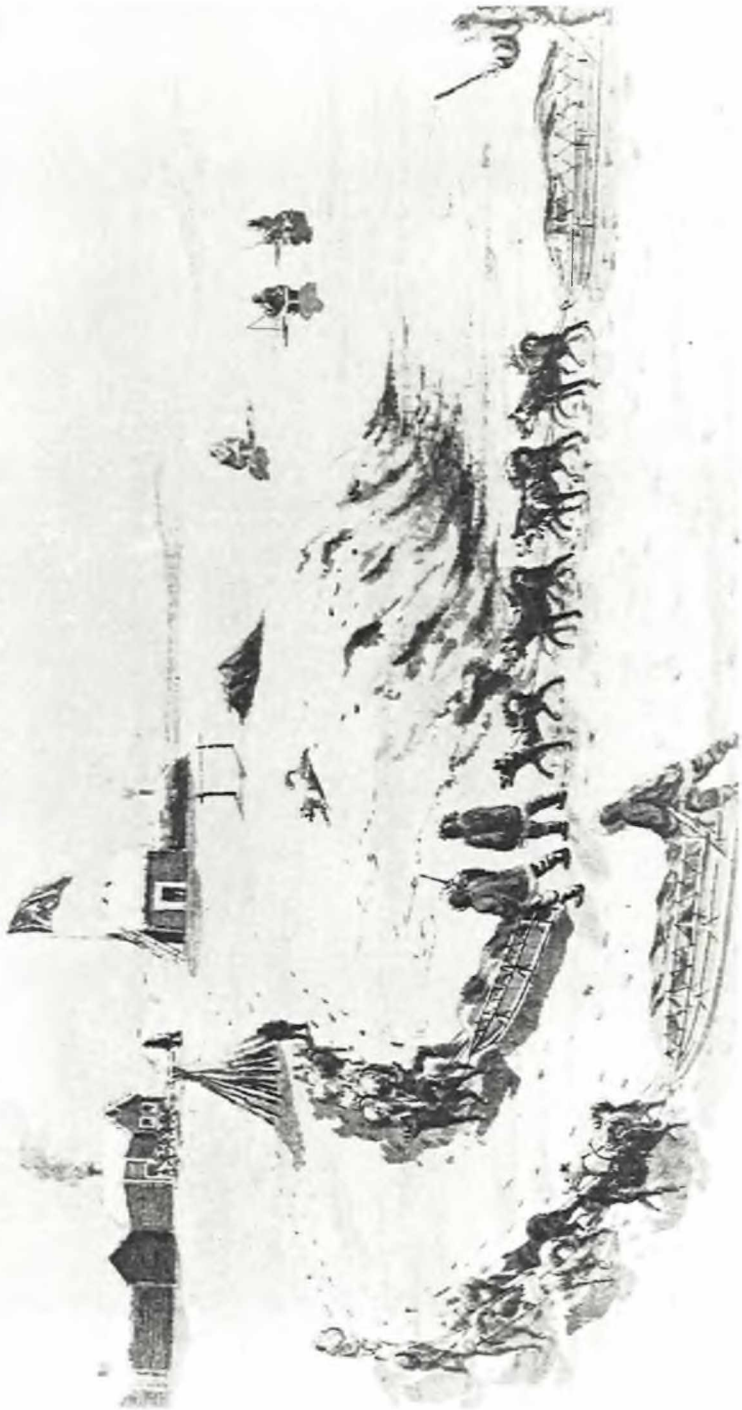
From the etic point of view, the conflict of 1851 was a response to foreign invasion, social dislocation due to epidemic, and economic stress. From the Koyukon point of view it was a power struggle of three regional *deyenenh*, in an attempt to restore social and cosmic order. Many western stories, one might say mythologies, have grown out of the conflict of 1851. Most of these tales are built on an erroneous notions of what the spiritual functionaries were. Creative liberties are taken with concepts that are not fully understood. Ivan Petroff (Ms), a census taker and writer for Hubert Bancroft in the late 1800s, is an author who is known to have spread the ink freely when discussing the Last Great Indian War. His tale of "Konny-Gen", an Athabaskan Indian incarcerated in the federal prison at San Quentin in the late 1800s is one such story. Konny-Gen's alleged involvement in the attack of 1851 cannot be verified and has been questioned by several scholars. His alleged age and other details argue for this story being a fabrication. Petroff was not the only one who held claim to obtaining the "real story", much like the tabloids of today. Another version of "the real story" was authored by Capt. Haynes (1940), an employee of an early fur trading enterprise on the Koyukuk river. Haynes wrote an exotic article for a national

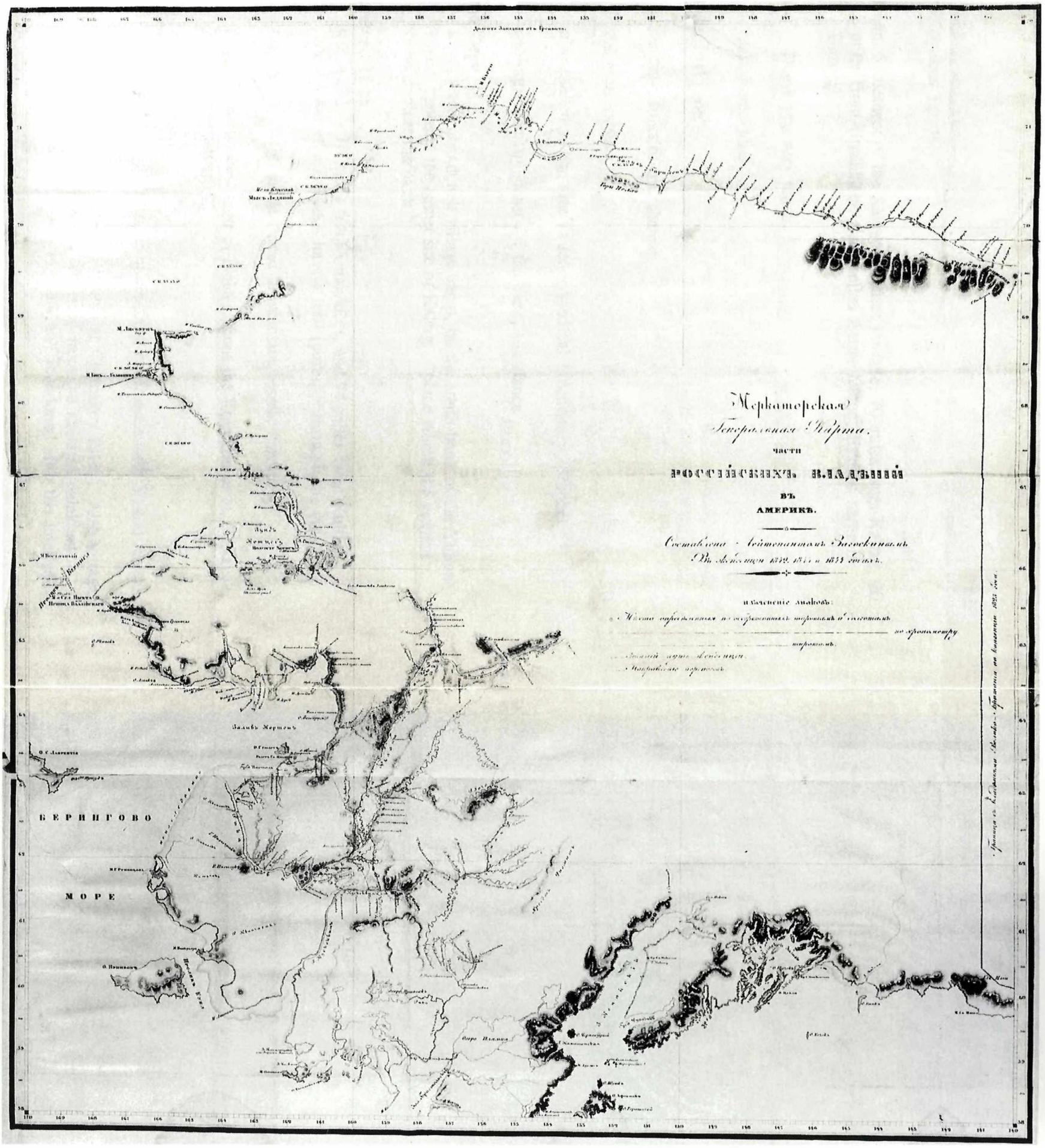
magazine in which he claimed personal association with a participant in the event of 1851. Like Petroff's account, that of Haynes cannot be verified, and the article contain several obvious errors. Probably the best known of these tales is Freuchen's "The Law of Larion" published in 1952. This novel based on a few historical facts is a flight of fancy which winds an intriguing tale of barbaric savagery in the wild north, pitting the indigenous inhabitants against foreign entrepreneurs. Many historians of Alaska choose to accept these fictitious accounts. As stated above, the majority of these publications are based on western perceptions of economic and political pressures. While these issues were real factors in the disruption of the social order of the Koyukon people, the attack was not carried out with the intentions of economic or political gain. For the Koyukon, a matter of spiritual importance, it was and still is a shaman's war.


Nulato
Koyukuk R.
Yukon River
Norton Sound
Unalakleet R.
Mikhailovskiy
Redoubt
Klikitarik
Klikitarik
Golsovia R.
Anvik River
Shageluk Slough
River
Pastol Bay
Innoko
Takotna River
River
McGrath
Kuskowkim
Anvik
Bonasila
Anilukhtakpak
(Holy Cross)
Paimiut
Yukon River
Ikogmiut
(Russian Mission)
Kuskokwim River
Stony River
Lime Hills
Kolmakivskiy
Redoubt
Aphrewn Mouth
(After Vanstone 1979)
0
50 Miles


Koyukuk River
Melozitna River
Kokrines
Nulato
Yukon River
Shaktolik
Unalakleet River
Kaiyuh Mts
Nowitna River
NORTON SOUND
Unalakleet
Mikhailovskiy Redoubt
(St. Michael)
Inoko R.
Klikitarik
Anvik R.
Holikachuk
Pastolik
Pastolik R.
Anvik
Shageluk
Bonasila
Paimiut
Anilukhtakpak (Holy Cross)
Kuskokwim River
0
100 Miles
(After Vansione 1979:76)
Aleksandrovskiy Redoubt
(Nushagak)
Nushagak River


Koyukuk River
Buckland R.
Kateel R.
Gisasa R.
Melozitna River
Kokrines
Nulato
Ingutarik R.
Ungalik R.
Nulato R.
Yukon River
Shaktolik R.
Kaltag
Shaktolik
Unalakleet River
Kaiyuh Mts.
NORTON SOUND
Unalakleet
Nowitna River
Mikhallovskiy Redoubt
(St. Michael)
Innoko R.
Klikitarik
Pastolik
Anvik R.
Hoskokwim
Pastolik R.
Anvik
Bonasila
Shageluk
Paimiut
Anilukbtakpak (Holy Cross)
Ikogmiut
(Russian Mission)
Kuskokwim River
Aleksandrovskiy Redoubt
(Nushagak)
Nushagak River
0
100 Miles
(After Varnstone 1979:76)





Glossary of Koyukon Terms

Admełlek Denh Settlement of the Kaltag-Unakleet Portage, 70 miles from Kaltag, 20 miles from Unalakleet; also spelled Atemellekten, Eskimo name is Ulukaq.

Anaa Maasee'; Thank you very much.

denaa man, humankind

denaa hut'aane; real people

deyenenh spiritual functionary, shaman

dotson'sa the great raven

henaay also spelled as han'aihe in Jetté; spiritual functionary, prophet

heeyo healing ceremony; feast for the dead, stickdance

Hogholedlenh Denh
locality and abandoned village camp, on the south bank of the Yukon River, opposite the actual site of Kaltag. "place where the current flows against the bank."

Hugh Tleeneetonh Denh
site which is 16 miles from Unalakleet, and 74 miles from Kaltag, "place where the Eskimos have a trail [portage] through the area".

hutlaane a system of religious law used to maintain cosmic harmony

Kaiyuh the flats south, southwest of Nulato; from the Koyukon term, Kkaayeh, homeland or settlement.

Kakhatukkatuk
village on Ttutago River, 15 miles from confluence with Yukon River.

Kakhokgotna mouth of Ttutago River, later known as Chiroskey River. Also village of same name, on the middle crossing from the Kaltag-Unalakleet Portage, used by Malakhov in 1838, and abandoned after the smallpox epidemic.

K'e*l*aa*l*aatno' R.
spelled Kalyalyakhtna R. in early sources; Gisasa River, tributary of Koyukuk River.

Ke*l*ghoteyet spelled Kelroteyet in early sources; former village on the lower Koyukuk River.

k'ezaakk hoarfrost

Khutul'kkat [Hudokkaakk'at, current orthography]
mouth of a river or stream...locality and village on the north bank of the Yukon river, 4 miles below Kaltag, at the mouth of a nameless river. This river having no name of its own is termed simply *Tokkotno'*, i.e. affluent, inland stream.

K'eleek et'aanenh
"one who has a song"; spiritual intermediary; spirit medium

Kodeelkaakk'at
former village at confluence of Kateel River and Koyukuk R.

Medzeyh Te Hut'aane
Caribou people, caribou clan.

naaghedenee*l*ne; transitory realm of the dead, prior to t*l*aa noten.

noltseen Copper people or bear clan

Noolaaghedoh
former site at the confluence of the Nulato and Yukon Rivers, "place of the dog salmon".

nukk'umedze; breath soul, or the vital essence of life.

Ghenoy ts'elyo Denh
spelled Ranoytseloyoten in Jetté; former site 10 miles above Nulato. "place where a herd of caribou/reindeer crossed"

Hotolkkaakk'et; Rotolkakat in Jetté; 65 miles below Nulato, mouth of Kaiyuh slough.

Sayereltar John Siroska's Koyukon name

seghok'elaay; my very special friend, equivalent to a blood brother/sister

senh — a conceptualized procreative power derived from an ultimate source.

Ses Tseege' — also spelled Sestsi'ka or Tstsytseka, "cinnamon or brown bear"; locality also known as Tsook'aala, "Old Woman", 48 miles from Kaltag, and 42 miles to Unalakleet.

Soltol Denh — present day Blackburn

Sooge Ts'aatey
site in Kaiyuh, where a defense palisade or fort was erected against possible enemy attack. "place where marten come out"

T'egheInookkaakk'et
also spelled TaraInukakat, commonly known as Cottonwood City, the main camp of the Kaiyuh country.

tlaamaas — slate used to make the woman's semi-lunar knife.

tlaa noten — realm of the sky, light; final destination in the afterlife.

tl'eeyegge hut'aane
people of one language

tokkaa' — red-necked grebe

Todenaats'egheeltaanh Denh
locality 64 miles from Kaltag, or 26 miles to Unalakleet, on the K'aadoleetnaa' or Unalakleet River. Locally known by whites as "Whaleback" and "Third mail-cabin". "Place where someone was thrown into the water."

toneedze gheltseeIne
middle of the stream clan

yeege' — shadow soul or life force

Yoongge hut'aane
inland people; people of the Koyukuk River

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1. See: Captain Richard Collinson, C.B., R.N., commander of the Expedition, Journal of H.M.S. Enterprise, on the Expedition In Search of Sir John Franklin's Ships by Bering Strait 1850-55 (1889) pp. 128-130. Franklin, an arctic explorer in search of a "Northwest Passage" from the Atlantic to the Pacific, sailed from England in 1844 with the ships Erebus and Terror. The expedition disappeared from sight and knowledge, precipitating one of the greatest searches of the nineteenth century. It was eventually learned that all hands had perished. Barnard went to the eastern Arctic as part of the expedition under Sir James Ross. Barnard and his friend Edward Adams, ship surgeon, remained on the vessel when she was sent to the Pacific, under Captain Richard Collinson, to continue the search for Sir John Franklin.

2. See: Louis Renner, The Alaska Journal, Autumn 1975, 5(4):239-247.
Louis Renner, The Alaska Journal, Spring 1985, 15(2):16-21.
The Farthest North Collegian, February 1, 1936, pp. 3, 7.

3. Also called in some sources, Khogoltlinde. According to Eliza Jones Koyukon Ethnogeography, (1986, Alaska Native Language Center, University of Alaska Fairbanks), p. 7: "locality and abandoned village camp, on the south bank of the Yukon River, opposite the actual site of Kaltag." The Koyukon translation reads "place where the current flows against the bank".

4. Spelled To-tenatsere'ltanten by Jette. Described in Jones (1986:73) as: "locality on the coast slope of the Kaltag portage, 64 miles from Kaltag, or 26 miles to Unalaklit, on the K'aadoleetnaa' or Unalaklit river. Locally known by whites as "Whaleback" and "Third Mail-cabin"." Koyukon translation, "Place where someone was thrown into the water".

5. The 1844 manuscript copy of Lt. Zagoskin's original report to Arvid Adolf Etholen, chief manager of Russian America, was consulted to verify information cited from the 1967 English translation. Dr. Lydia T. Black of the University of Alaska Fairbanks Anthropology Department provided translation from Russian to English.

6. Malakhov's unpublished journal is not available for study.

7. According to William Loyens, S. J., a Catholic priest and anthropologist who utilized Jetté's material, "Jetté did much of his writing after 1905" (1966:11).

8. Francois X. Mercier came to Alaska in 1868, as a fur trader with the Pioneer Company out of San Francisco. He remained in Alaska until 1885, working for various fur traders during this period. His memoirs are housed at the Oregon Province Archives of the Society of Jesus at Gonzaga University, Spokane, Washington. It is probable that he wrote his memoirs at the request of Julius Jetté, S. J., who compiled a manuscript history of the Alaskan Catholic missions.

9. See (Black 1990) for discussion of the social status creole in Russian America.

10. Andrei Kondrat'evich Glazunov, a seafarer and employee of the Russian American Company, was the first to explore the Yukon River and Alaska's interior. During the winter of 1833-34, he reached the Yukon River via an overland route from St. Michael's on the Bering sea coast travelling to the headwaters of the Anvik River, then down the Anvik to the Yukon. He then travelled over land to the Kuskokwim River, returning to St. Michaels' via the same route in April 1834. Based on his description of plant and tree life, there is some discussion on the original overland passage that Glazunov traversed (Khlebnikov 1994:328-334). In the winter of 1834-1835, he made a second journey to the Anvik River, to select a site for a Russian settlement. Thus in 1836 a post was established at Ikogmiut (Russian Mission).

11. Aleksandr Filippovich Kashevarov was a naval officer, and explorer with the Russian American Company. During the summer of 1834 he led an expedition from St. Michael to the source of the Pastolik River. In 1838, Kashevarov was in charge of a hydrographic expedition to survey the far northwest coast of Russian America, specifically the last 200 miles between Point Barrow and Return Reef, the farthest west reached by both Sir John Franklin and Lieutenant George Beck in 1826 (Pierce 1990:213-214). K. T. Khlebnikov was manager of the Russian-American Company office in Sitka from 1818 to 1833 (Pierce 1990:230).

12. Kakhatukkatuk village situated on the Kakhokgotna River was considered by the local population as the middle of the three crossing to the coast. The village was abandoned after the smallpox epidemic of 1838-1839, and was overgrown with grass by the time of Zagoskin's exploration. In 1837 and again in 1839, Malakhov and Glazunov also traveled from Unalakleet to the Yukon by way of Ttutago, seventeen miles down stream of Kakhatukkatuk. The overland route via Ttutago River was considered the shortest crossing from the Yukon to the coast. This route passed through the village of Kuikkhoglyuk on the Ttutago River.

13. See Jones (1986:7) who in concurrence with Jetté and Koyukon elders describe Khutulkakat, or Hudokkaakk'at in current orthography, as a "general term meaning mouth of a river or stream...locality and village on the north bank of the Yukon River, 4 miles below Kaltag, at the mouth of a nameless river. This river having no name of its own is termed simply Tokkotno', i.e. "affluent", "the inland stream", and its mouth is designated as Hudokkaakk'at or "the mouth"."

14. Zagoskin (1967:147) mentions that Deriabin took in the family of Unilla, who perished in the smallpox epidemic: "...Three women and four small children and Volosaty owed their lives to the humanity of Deriabin, who was working for Malakhov as overseer in charge of trade goods"...So far, no marriage record for Deriabin has been located in the Russian Orthodox Church archives.

15. The authenticity of Ivan Petrov's material is subject to question. The Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley issued this caution: "Ivan Petrov, in his desire to supply H. H. Bancroft with materials of interest to him, is known to have exaggerated some accounts

and to have made up one or two stories...We wish to inform you that some of Petrov's manuscripts are inaccurate".

16. In earlier nomenclature the term Tungus was used with reference to the Evenk.

17. In some circles Pavlov was considered a creole of Russian descent while in others he was considered a Tlingit by virtue of his mother's identity. The Tlingit Indians of southeastern Alaska trace their lineage through their mother.

18. Malakhov referred to this settlement as Makaslag according to the Ulukagmyut ethnonym (Malakhov cited in Zagoskin 1967:189).

19. This settlement was called Bystraya by Zagoskin. According to Jones (1986:19) the village is 91 miles below Kaltag, and is currently referred to as Blackburn.

20. Spelled Maats'e Dets'eleeyh Denh in current orthography by Eliza Jones and described as "locality and village, on the north bank of the Yukon river, 28 miles below Kaltag. In spite of this considerable distance it is sometimes spoken of as "Lower Kaltag". Translated in Koyukon, the name means the place where we customarily get obsidian. These stones however do not seem to be common on the spot in our days" (Jones 1986:11).

21. See Jones (1986:19). Spelled Soltol Denh in current orthography and described as "locality on the north bank of the Yukon River, 91 miles below Kaltag. Also known as "Blackburn". The Koyukon translation is unknown.

22. The term "Uliukagmiut" was first used by Glazunov in 1833 to describe the inhabitants of the Unalakleet-Kaltag portage.

23. Ingalit was the Yupik name for the Athabaskans on the Yukon River and the Unalakleet-Kaltag portage.

24. See: Jones (1986:70). In Koyukon, the name Ses Tseega' refers to a cinnamon or brown bear. This landmark is also known as Tsook'aala in Koyukon, the meaning translated as Old Woman. The Russians referred to this mountain as Vesiolia Sopka.

25. In all probability, Zagoskin (1967:188) was referring to the former settlement, K'aahuyhdokkaakk'at, 35 miles below present Kaltag. Jones (1986:13) notes that there was formerly a large village which had been abandoned after an epidemic.

26. The question of "tribal" subdivisions, and Native recognized territories occupied the American anthropologists since the time of Franz Boas. More recently, anthropologists have redefined these subdivisions purely on the basis of linguistic criteria.

27. The Koyukon name for Ulukaq is Ademellek Denh, "place of the last sleep" (before reaching Unalakleet).

28. Kashevarov described the Malimiut as Natives who resided inland and north of Shaktoolik Bay. "They only come to the shore in spring when the ice breaks to catch bearded seals and do not trade with the coastal inhabitants" (Khlebnikov 1994:335). See also Matt Ganley, The Malimiut of Northwest Alaska: A Study in Ethnonymy, forthcoming in Estudes/Inuit/Studies.

29. This information can be found in the unpublished manuscripts of Eliza Jones, Koyukuk River Place Names, Alaska Native Language Center, University of Alaska Fairbanks, Fairbanks, Alaska.

30. Contact was maintained by residents of the Gisasa, the Kateel, and the Nulato Rivers with those from the Unalakleet, Shaktoolik, Buckland, and Selawik Rivers. The Gisasa and Kateel flow in an easterly direction and are tributaries of the Koyukuk River. The Nulato flows in an east southeast direction into the Yukon River. Both the Unalakleet and the Shaktoolik Rivers flow west into the Bering Straits area. See: Sidney Huntington, Shadows on the Koyukuk, (1993, Anchorage: Alaska Northwest Books) and Madeline Solomon, Madeline Solomon, Koyukuk, a biography, (1981, Blaine, WA: Hancock House Publishers).

31. A discussion on this relationship can be found in Madeline Solomon's biography, published by the Yukon-Koyukuk school district, see attached bibliography.

32. See Katherine L. Arndt, Ph.D. dissertation: Dynamics of the Fur Trade on the Middle Yukon River, Alaska 1833-1867, work in progress, University of Alaska Fairbanks, Department of Anthropology.

33. See: Ernest S. Burch, Jr., War and Trade, in Crossroads of Continents, edited by William W. Fitzhugh and Aron Crowell (1988, Washington, D.C: Smithsonian Institution Press), pp. 227-240.

34. "Sunwise", as stated in English by Athabaskan speakers, refers to the rotation of the sun beginning in the east.

35. Mark Badger did research among the Koyukon from the Koyukuk River for his master's thesis at the Scott's Polar Institute of Cambridge.

36. Definition from Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English language (1989): strip off or remove the skin from; stripped, skinned.

37. H91-12-15 Songs and Legends Series, University of Alaska Fairbanks, Rasmuson Library Oral History Collection.
Narrator: Charlie Brush (CB) of Nulato, AK; present were Lawrence (LS) and Tatiana Saunders (TS)
Interviewer: Poldine Carlo (PC), Fairbanks/Nulato
Transcribed by Eliza Jones, translated by Eliza Jones and Miranda Wright (10-24-94)

38. The Koyukon place name is Todenaats'egheeltaanh Denh. Translated as "the place where someone was thrown into the water." The site is located on the coastal slope of the Kaltag portage on the K'aadoleetnaa' or Unalakleet River. A distance of sixty-four miles from Kaltag or twenty-six miles to Unalakleet. It was also known by "whites" as Whaleback or Third Mail Cabin.

39. The name of John Brown's granddad, Tleek'etaaldlo, was furnished by Franklin Madros of Kaltag. His identity and burial place have also been confirmed by several people from Kaltag and Nulato. Lower Koyukon orthography was provided by Eliza Jones.

40. The narrator is in Nulato. It is therefore understood that he is referring to Kaltag.

41. It is understood that this action keeps the tube open for him until he returns.

42. Narrator is referring to Clement Esmailka. Clement's dad was Huts'ak'idoteelmitsiya, known as Tom Esmailka born in 1883 to Gregory Ismailka (1864-1945) and Marina K'elaayaah (1865-1937) of NooLoyet, a small village on the north bank of the Yukon River, twenty-two miles below Nulato.

43. Coffins were temporarily placed on a rack and at intervals of a few days a small fire was lit below it, resulting in partial mummification.

44. See note #5.

45. The use of coffin racks suggests the eventual ensepulcher in elevated coffins. For further information see: Cornelius Osgood, Ingalik Material Culture, New Haven: Yale University Press, (1940), pp. 109-112.

46. A site located on the coastal slope of the Kaltag Portage, sixteen miles to Unalakleet or seventy-four miles from Kaltag. The Koyukon translation is "the place where the Eskimo have a trail or portage through the area." For further information see: Eliza Jones, Koyukon Ethnogeography, Alaska Native Language Center, University of Alaska Fairbanks (1986), p. 74.

47. Narrator refers to Jessie Sipary of Nulato, the former Jessie Madros of Kaltag.

48. Although the shrew is very small, it will viciously attack larger rodents. It is therefore considered very courageous by the Koyukon.

49. This statement implies that the warriors had powerful protective spirits and were under the guardianship of a deyenenh who possessed a "fog" song, which places an invisible shield around the people making them invisible to the enemy.

50. Koyukon speakers understand the phrase "given a dish" to refer to a special container of food given to an individual as part of the heeyo [stickdance] ceremony.

51. Contemporarily referred to as Cottonwood City. Jetté's geographic placenames refers to this site as "TaraInukakat, the main camp of the Kayar country.

52. See the biography, Martha Joe published by Spirit Mountain Press for the Yukon-Koyukuk School District of Alaska for an account of the escape by the son-in-law, DiloghuhudaatIggunh. Also see Jette's unpublished manuscript, "Kayar Narratives" for an account told by the escapee to Father Monroe, a Catholic priest, in 1896.